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BY
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LATE CHIEF AGENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL
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JOSEPH RICKERBY, SHERBOURN LANE.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. WILLIAM KEPPEL,
VISCOUNT BARRINGTON.

MY LORD,

THE circumstances which have given rise to the following pages being familiar to your Lordship, and the kind interest which you have been pleased to take in the fate of their Author, amidst his recent and no common trials and anxieties, would alone have formed a sufficient inducement for requesting permission to dedicate to your Lordship these my humble labours; but when to these motives, which are purely personal, is superadded my long and intimate knowledge of your Lordship's benevolent and extended views, I feel that I can associate with this work no name which would confer on me so much honour as a patron, or convey so many grateful recollections to the mind of

Your Lordship's

Very faithful and obliged Servant,

ROBERT DAWSON.

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INTRODUCTION.

As the disposition for emigration extends, the desire of acquiring correct ideas relative to those countries which are best adapted to receive an influx of population will of necessity increase, and any accurate information concerning them is therefore unquestionably matter of interest to the public. Amongst these countries Australia, or New South Wales, may be considered as one of the most important.

There is perhaps no country in the world that has been so highly eulogized and so much misrepresented. Interested motives have prompted many to say more in its praise than it has deserved ; others, who have little or no practical knowledge of agriculture, or from want of information on those points which could alone enable them to convey just notions of the country and its means of production, have misrepresented its capabilities ; while a third party, possessing the requisite knowledge, and a desire honestly to impart it, have failed to secure attention

amidst the extravagant and romantic ideas which have prevailed upon the subject. The recent precipitate emigration to Swan River by all classes of persons, many of whom are not in the least degree qualified to grapple with the difficulties they must inevitably experience, is a practical illustration of the delusive notions now existing upon the subject of New South Wales. The adventurers have gone out with such feelings, and under such extraordinary circumstances, as would almost justify the belief that their imaginations had pictured to them a land actually flowing with milk and honey, and yielding its fruits without labour.

Having resided in Australia for three years as the chief agent of the Australian Agricultural Company, and having travelled over a very considerable portion of the located as well as the unlocated parts of the colony, I have had ample opportunity of acquiring such information as I hope will be found acceptable and useful to those who are desirous of knowing what the country really is.

I shall detail the result of my observations in my own plain and homely language, making no pretensions to a finished style of composition, which the active duties of my professional career during the last twenty-five years have afforded me but very slender opportunities of acquiring; and trusting that the candour of the public, before whom I am now induced to appear at the earnest (and perhaps mistaken) recommendation of some valued friends who have seen my Journals, will consider the

simplicity of truth, and the honest testimony of an unprejudiced mind, as some compensation for the absence of polished style and methodical arrangement.

The following pages are not put forth to gratify the vanity of authorship, but with the view of communicating facts where much misrepresentation has existed, and to rescue, as far as I am able, the character of a race of beings (of whom I believe I have seen more than any other European has done) from the gross misrepresentations and unmerited obloquy that has been cast upon them.

It is said that all men have their hobbies. I candidly avow mine, which the following narrative would probably sufficiently evidence against me even without my confession—namely, the study of human nature in its wild and untutored state, and in its gradual approaches to civilization. It has been the fate of some to encounter savage tribes, and to find amongst them only a barbarous ferocity; it has been my happier lot to meet a generous confidence in my unenlightened brethren of the south, who, though born and nurtured in the darkest ignorance, and possessing little in common with civilized man, have yet shown that germ of good within which marks them as the children of one common parent.

The condition, however, of these poor aborigines, and the ignorance which has hitherto prevailed upon the subject, have unhappily excited little or no interest concerning them in the minds of persons intending to emigrate as agriculturists to New South Wales. Their first step is

to procure an introduction to some individual who has been in the colony, and although he may have been a resident only in Sydney, and therefore wholly unacquainted with the agricultural capacities of the settlement, and the habits of the aborigines in their native state, still the mere fact of his having been in New South Wales is deemed sufficient to stamp his information with an authority to be relied upon, while the corrupted and degraded remnant of the native tribe which prowls about the streets of Sydney, is shown up as the fag-end of humanity, and represented as a sample of the whole. Nothing is generally more fallacious, for (without imputing any wish to mislead) not one person in a hundred of those who return to this country know much, if any thing, of the real state of the case in either respect. No one who has not been a practical settler, and well informed upon the subject of soils and rural affairs generally, as well as of the nature of the country far beyond his own location, can possess that kind of knowledge which would be really valuable to persons intending to emigrate; and how many there are actually residing in the colony who do not possess these requisites, and who know little of any thing twenty miles beyond the towns or farms where they reside, will be best understood by those who know most of the country. Captains of ships are often considered great authorities; but as they have no practical knowledge of agriculture or of the soil, they generally report favourably or unfavourably, according to the nature of

the season which prevails during their sojourn in the country, or according to the impressions which they receive from a particular district or farm which they may have happened to visit, and not unfrequently from the interested representations of an old settler or two, who have an object in sending them home well charged.

Many letters, dated from Sydney, have from time to time appeared in the English newspapers; some of them have been so well and so plausibly written, that it would be impossible for any persons ignorant of the colony to detect the false views and misrepresentations (probably unintentional) which they contained. Such absurdities indeed have been sent forth to the public in this way, that a person intimately acquainted with the details of the colony, would be apt to imagine that the writers had never been in the country at all.

Since my return to England I have had an opportunity of hearing some observations from a highly respectable gentleman, who had resided several years in Sydney. Any remarks from him upon the subject of New South Wales would have been considered as valuable by persons wishing to obtain accurate information of that country. The observations however which he made, demonstrated to me that he really knew nothing of the matter, and added another very striking instance to the many which I had before experienced, that persons who are supposed to be good authorities because they have been at, or have resided in Sydney, are frequently no better judges of the

soil and the *general* capabilities of the country, than an English tradesman living and confined to his trade in London would be of the interior and agriculture of Ireland. Persons wishing to emigrate from foreign countries to the British dominions as agriculturists, would hardly venture to rely upon information obtained from such a source; yet we see conduct similar to it daily practised by our countrymen with reference to New South Wales, which can only be accounted for from its great distance from the mother country, which unfortunately causes almost every thing regarding it to be viewed through a false medium.

If I am not much mistaken, the prevailing idea in England is, and always has been, that Australia is a rich and naturally productive portion of the globe. I can only say that such an opinion of it is quite at variance with my experience. The great extent of the country (if the unknown interior be not barren) will for ages to come, in *some* degree, compensate for its defective soil; but this circumstance, and the want of navigable waters into the interior of the country, must for ever cause it to remain a pastoral, and consequently a comparatively thinly populated region. Districts of good soil are generally found in the immediate neighbourhood of rivers, as well as on their banks. The scenery also is sometimes beautifully wild and striking, and sufficiently varied to interest the traveller in no ordinary degree, but these do not constitute the *general* character of the country; nor have I ever conversed with any persons there of experience and observation

who have not expressed themselves greatly disappointed upon these subjects, after comparing the reality of things with the descriptions that had been given of them in England. People in general however, and especially settlers who emigrated at an earlier period, who have been fortunate in the situation and quality of their land, and whose employment is in the open air, are captivated by the voluptuousness of the climate, and the freedom of the air from distempered miasma, arising from decayed vegetable matter and stagnant pools. The absence of under-wood secures this happy result, and leaves an open and grassy country on almost every side of them. It affords also, without previous labour, facilities for grazing flocks and herds upon the spontaneous herbage of the soil, and forms a pleasing relief to the eye under the blaze of an almost perpetual sunshine; but, unfortunately, all these advantages, which render it so pleasant and so healthy an abode for man, are produced by causes which are also the origin of its poverty, and which I shall endeavour more particularly to explain in the body of this work.

There is another feature in this remarkable country which must ever have great influence on the extent of its population and the quantity of its exportable productions, at least as far as present settlements are concerned—I mean the want of navigable waters. Nowhere has any discovery been made of a river which is navigable above twenty or twenty-five miles, and enough is now known of the coasts at very considerable distances from the present

settlements, to warrant a belief that there are none in existence of greater extent. The form of the country will explain in some degree the reason of such an extraordinary fact. On the line of coasts as far as I have seen them, which is from about latitude 27° to 40° both on the eastern and western sides, there are dividing ranges of mountains running from south to north not more than fifty or sixty miles from the sea. The waters from the interior do not appear any where to have penetrated them, and consequently rivers which discharge themselves into those parts of the ocean, take their rise on the exterior sides of the ranges not more than sixty miles from the sea.

It is not yet ascertained on what quarter of the coast the great interior waters have their outlet; but from the little that is known of the country, and from its exterior appearances, it is conjectured that it takes place on the north-west side of it. In this case, the waters which rise in the mountains south of the settlement called Bathurst, even though they moved in a direct line, must run a distance of nearly two thousand miles, but which, according to the tortuous courses of rivers, could not be less than six or seven thousand miles, the extent of the country being about two thousand miles across it. On the eastern coast the range has been crossed, and a settlement called Bathurst has been established behind it. The country about it is of greater elevation than those parts which are nearer to the sea, and consequently colder. Grain and other productions, however, have been raised there equal

to any other in the colony ; but the distance from Sydney, over a difficult country, and the want of any navigable rivers, will not admit of the settler's pursuing agriculture there, or in any situation similar to it, beyond raising a supply for his own family, and a reserve against the casualties of the seasons.

*Sandwell Cottage,
Handsworth, near Birmingham,
Sept. 1830*

A U S T R A L I A.

CHAPTER I.

THE AUTHOR'S APPOINTMENT—DEPARTURE FROM ENGLAND—ARRIVAL AT SYDNEY—LANDING OF THE PARTY—RETREAT FARM—NEWCASTLE—PORT STEPHENS—EXCURSION—NATIVES—ERECTION OF BARK HUTS—FRIENDLY DISPOSITION OF NATIVES—THEIR EFFICIENT ASSISTANCE—RETURN TO SYDNEY—DEPARTURE FROM RETREAT FARM—ARRIVAL OF THE PARTY AT PORT STEPHENS—ARRANGEMENTS—PASSAGE OF CATTLE ACROSS THE HARBOUR—DISGRACEFUL CONDUCT OF A SHIP-CAPTAIN—ARRIVAL OVERLAND OF SHEEP AND CATTLE—SCHOOL ESTABLISHED—RELIGIOUS WORSHIP PERFORMED—LOSS OF SCHOONERS—TIMBER CUTTING PARTIES—RUNAWAY CONVICTS—MURDER OF A NATIVE BOY—TRIAL AND CONVICTION OF THE MURDERERS.

IN the month of December, 1824, I accepted the appointment of chief agent of the Australian Agricultural Company. In the March following I went to France to make purchases of Merino sheep, to be transported to New South Wales; and on the 24th of June I embarked at Cowes on board the *York*, having under my charge about forty individuals, (men, women, and children,) together with three hundred and twenty-three sheep, nine head of horned cattle, and a choice collection of British and other plants, selected for cultivation in the far distant land of promise to which we were bound.

My nephew, Mr. J. G. Dawson, having been appointed my assistant, embarked at the same time on board the Brothers, having also charge of forty individuals, between three and four hundred sheep, three head of horned cattle, and seven horses.

In less than thirty-six hours from the ship's weighing anchor, we lost sight of the shores of our native country.

On the 23d of November, 1825, after a favourable voyage of twenty-three weeks, (including fourteen days passed at Rio de Janeiro,) we cast anchor in the harbour of Sydney. Our losses in both the ships, during the voyage, amounted to no more than eighteen sheep, and the remainder were landed in better condition than when they were put on board at Cowes.

The directors of the Company having appointed a local committee out of their proprietary resident in the colony, I waited on the only member of it then at Sydney, and consulted him as to the best plan of landing and providing for the stock, and of removing the establishment to a farm called Retreat, which the directors had ordered to be hired for the Company's use, previous to my arrival.

The stock were immediately landed and provided for by his excellency Sir Thomas Brisbane on the government domain.

It was thought desirable to keep the servants several days on board, although they were, as may naturally be supposed, eager to be relieved from their confined quarters.

Two days previous to their being landed, several carpenters and masons were dispatched from the ships to the Retreat Farm, for the purpose of making some arrangements before the arrival of the families there. On

the 27th of November all the establishment were landed, with the whole of their baggage. About twenty carts were mustered in the morning for their conveyance, but it was quite late in the day before they were loaded and ready to start. The scene before, as well as after the procession moved, was a novel and a somewhat ludicrous one. The women, not having been previously ashore, were attired in their best clothes, displaying their bonnets and ribbons, in the expectation, as they said, of being conveyed to the Farm in a more respectable style; imagining, no doubt, that covered carts or hackney coaches were as easily to be found in Sydney as in London. Several of them were unwilling to ride with their luggage, while some of the drivers of the carts were equally unwilling to admit those to seats who were ready to take them, alleging, with the nicety of distinction and cunning peculiar to "the experienced" of Botany Bay, that they had contracted to carry only dead, and not living matter.

The greatest confusion and discontent at this moment prevailed amongst all parties. Children crying, mothers scolding and weeping, husbands complaining, and drivers grumbling at being over-loaded. "What is to be done?" I several times exclaimed; for I was really unable, at the moment, to discern how to reconcile matters, having no other resources than my own wits to help me out of the difficulty. At length I was obliged to promise something extra to the carters, whose object I saw was to take advantage of my situation. And I also hired as many more carts as could be obtained for the further accommodation of my party, who amounted to nearly eighty persons. I now reasoned with some, and scolded and laughed at others, till I succeeded in causing all the women

and smaller children to be placed in the vehicles, when I ordered the drivers to move on in a line. The carts were accompanied by the men and boys on foot. My nephew, and the Company's wool-sorter, Mr. Charles Hall, were each mounted on horseback: the one rode in front as conductor, while the other brought up the rear. The procession reached a considerable distance, and as it passed through the principal streets in Sydney, the moving multitude of voluntary exiles excited no little curiosity amongst the inhabitants.

To those who had been long absent from England, it must have been (as I know it was to some) a rich treat to see such a number of inhabitants of the old country at once starting out, as it were, from the opposite side of the globe, fresh in their habiliments from England, as if they had just left their cottages at home for a Sunday's stroll; and above all, it was curious to observe our little shepherd-boys, with their homely garments and heavy hob-nailed boots, staring and gaping about as they marched along the street. I accompanied the cavalcade on foot beyond the town, when I returned to transact some matters of business, having promised to join them as early as possible at the Farm on the following morning.

The distance from Sydney to the Retreat was between thirty and forty miles, and the party were therefore obliged to travel all night. The weather when they left Sydney was very fine, but about seven o'clock in the evening it began to rain, and continued to pour incessantly the whole night. I felt much for the poor women and children; but there was then no possibility of affording them any relief, nor could they hope for any until they should arrive at their journey's end. The following

morning proved remarkably clear and bright, and I started very early for Retreat, being extremely anxious to learn how they got through their journey.

The first persons I saw when I entered the premises were the two young men who had accompanied the party on horseback; they were precisely in the plight in which they had arrived a few hours previously. Their appearance was haggard and wretched in the extreme: their clothes were hardly yet dry upon their backs, their hats were bent in various shapes by the drenching rain; the red dust with which they had been almost suffocated, previous to the rain, had deeply stained their cravats and faces, and one of them was partly covered with red mud, by the repeated tumbles of the jaded hack on which he had been mounted. I was hard hearted enough to enjoy a good laugh at their piteous appearance; and on learning from them that the party had arrived safe, and were billeted in different quarters of the house and premises, I proceeded further towards the back front, where the carts had been unloaded. Here I saw, first, a quantity of boxes, trunks, and other luggage scattered about; and next, several of the boys and men fast asleep on the ground, under the eaves of the house, and in different situations near the baggage, all of them in their wet and dirty clothes, just as they had arrived.

The house and detached offices were fortunately pretty extensive, and afforded cover for the families. Some of them had established themselves in the dairy, some in the cellar, and others in the different rooms and verandahs attached to the house. One room had been reserved for the young men and myself, and on entering the passage to this apartment, I found it occupied by

two families, who were asleep on the floor, at each end of it. Some of the individuals awoke on the door being opened, and on seeing me, wrapped themselves more snugly in their blankets, and called out for me to pass on. I felt too sensibly how miserable a female, with a young family around her, must feel herself in such a situation, and after such a journey, not to sympathise sincerely with them, but deferred any expression of it till after they had arisen and taken their breakfasts, when I appeared amongst them. I had calculated that the change from ship-board to the shore, after a long voyage, and the appearance of bright sunshine with a warm day, after such a dismal journey in the preceding night, would have a favourable effect on their minds, and in this I was not mistaken; for several of them, after complaining and remonstrating with me, remarked, that any thing, to be sure, was preferable to being on board of ship; but, that had they known what they did then, nobody would have persuaded them to leave home. I believe, however, that they were convinced that I had done all I could for them in my situation; and taking my assurances that I would make the best arrangements in my power for their future comfort, they recovered their good-humour, and bantered each other upon the ridiculous figure they cut, and the manner in which they had established themselves on the premises. The men behaved themselves with great fortitude, and conducted themselves, amidst the trials and complaints of their wives, with much good sense and good-temper: they saw the impossibility of any remedy at the moment, and set to work, as soon as possible, under my directions, to make as many temporary huts as would give separate

accommodation to each family, until a spot should be fixed upon in some other quarter of the colony, for their permanent settlement.

As soon as the men had made the best provision in their power for their families, the sheep were ordered from the government domain at Sydney, to Retreat Farm, where they were to remain with the establishment, under the care of my nephew, Mr. J. G. Dawson, while I proceeded to examine such unoccupied parts of the country as offered any prospects for the final selection of a grant of a million of acres.

The stores and implements which we had brought out with us, were deposited in a warehouse in Sydney, whence they were issued from time to time, according to our wants.

On the 1st of January, 1826, I left Sydney, in company with Mr. Harrington, the committee's secretary; Mr. Armstrong, the Company's surveyor; and Mr. Dangar, a government assistant surveyor, for the purpose of examining the country in the neighbourhood of Port Stephens, which is situated on the coast, about a hundred and ten miles north of the town of Sydney, by water, and about two hundred miles by land.

We took our passage in the cutter which sailed every week from Sydney to Newcastle, at which latter place we landed, and waited several days, in expectation of meeting some of the Company's servants, whom I had despatched overland from Retreat Farm, with the horses necessary for our journey.

As the harbour at Port Stephens had been represented to me by Mr. Oxly, the surveyor-general, as a safe and capacious one, and the country about it as likely to furnish

sufficient land for the Company's purposes, I despatched several servants from Sydney, in a small schooner laden with provisions, stores, and tents, with orders to wait in the harbour at Port Stephens, until we should arrive there with the overland party.

Having had a very short passage from Sydney, and finding nothing to interest me at Newcastle, beyond a few hours, I accompanied Mr. Dangar about thirty miles up the River Hunter, and remained for two days with Mr. Macleod of Luskintyre. In my ride backwards and forwards to this place I saw a good deal of the country, and something of the habits of the wild natives, several of whom we saw perfectly naked, on one of their hunting expeditions, crossing our track, and in the act of forming themselves in a circle round their kangaroo game. They were acquainted with Mr. Dangar, whose duties as a surveyor had led him to pass much of his time in the Bush or Forest. Some civilities passed between them when we separated in pursuit of our respective businesses.

On the day after our return, our land party joined us nearly about the time we had calculated upon. They pitched their tent and tethered their horses on a plot of grass in the town nearly opposite the inn where we were quartered, and after waiting a day to recruit, we swam the horses across the mouth of the River Hunter, to what is called the North Shore. Our servants encamped there for the night, and early on the following morning we joined them, to proceed by the beach to Port Stephens, when I had a specimen, for the first time, of the nature and dexterity of the thieves who were ordered by the commandant to row us across the river. On taking our

baggage from the boat, we missed some articles belonging to my personal luggage; and although the convicts who put us across were constantly employed at their oars, and continually under our eyes, they managed to purloin the articles, and to elude detection.

At Newcastle, and in the immediate vicinity, I found a large number of natives, with many of whom I endeavoured to make acquaintance; and the evening before I left the place, I agreed with two of them to conduct us by the nearest route, to that part of the harbour of Port Stephens where we had appointed to meet the schooner. One of them passed over with the party the same evening, not intending to remain there; but the pilot, who then knew them better than I did, suggested that it would be better to keep him while he was there, for otherwise he would probably not be forthcoming when required early in the morning, and he was therefore left with the party. In the morning it was exactly as the pilot had foretold; the other native was nowhere to be found. He had received a good supply of tobacco as an earnest the night before, and with this he was better satisfied than to accompany us to Port Stephens, which we found to be no less than between thirty and forty miles by the route which we travelled.

The black man therefore whom we had thus caught, was our only guide, and it was with much reluctance that he consented to act in that capacity alone; but after travelling a few miles he became reconciled, and elated with the thought of the clothes and good cheer I had promised him when we should arrive: he was still further gratified in being allowed to carry a musket. He informed me that he had only been upon a visit to New-

castle, and that he belonged to the south side of the harbour of Port Stephens; (in fact, the very place to which we were going;) but that he had left Nanny, his *gin*, (wife) behind him. It was therefore settled that he should return for her whenever he pleased, as soon as he had conducted us; that she was to have a gown and cap, &c.; and that both of them were to come and live with me always.

The day was very fine: all our party were in good spirits, and as we travelled on the beach, I was highly amused with the good-natured chattering of our sable companion, the more so from his being the first I had an opportunity of freely conversing with. After proceeding about twenty miles along the beach, we struck across the country, in the direction of a place called Soldiers' Point, lying on the south side of the inner harbour of Port Stephens.

As soon as our native guide, whom I named Ben, had led us to a spring of water, we halted and took our dinner under the shade of some trees adjoining to it. Some of our party on foot had by this time begun to feel the effects of a long walk over an unusually soft, sandy beach: the refreshment and relief, therefore, which this cool shady rest, and the meal of fried bacon and tea afforded, will I have no doubt be long remembered by them, as amongst the first of the agreeable impressions which occurred in this distant land. It was the first repast of the kind which I had partaken of, and I shall always recollect it with pleasure. Ben had also a feast of tea and biscuit, which was succeeded by the favourite pipe of tobacco, but the bacon was too fat and too salt for him to partake of it. Not long after we had resumed our journey, a call or cooee was heard at a short distance

from us in the forest. Ben was instantly alive to it, and observed to me, in a quick and animated manner: "You hear, Massa? Black pellow cooe." With this he bounded forward with his musket on his shoulder, to seek his friend, whose voice he well knew. In a few minutes they met, when I immediately saw Ben liberally bestowing his tobacco and pipe upon his friend, who was an elderly man, perfectly naked.

When I came up to them, Ben said: "Brodder belonging to me, massa: tit (sit) down here always." I was much amused at this meeting, and above all delighted at the prompt and generous manner in which this wild and untutored man conducted himself towards his wandering brother. If they be savages, thought I, they are very civil ones; and with kind treatment we have not only nothing to fear, but a good deal to gain from them. I felt an ardent desire to cultivate their acquaintance, and also much satisfaction from the idea that my situation would afford me ample opportunities and means for doing so.

Before we arrived at Soldiers' Point darkness came on, and as the road over the rocks near the shore was both difficult and dangerous for our loaded pack-horses, Ben ran forward to the Point, and brought to our assistance the corporal and two soldiers of the 57th regiment, who were stationed with three others at that solitary spot, to intercept the runaway convicts, on their passage from the penal settlement of Port Macquarie to Newcastle and Sydney. "Welcome to you, gentlemen," was the salute of the corporal as he approached us; and welcome too was the corporal, for we should have found it difficult to reach the station in the dark with the pack-horses without

his assistance. We received from him the intelligence that the schooner had arrived in the harbour several days before, and was lying at anchor opposite their hut. In a short time we arrived at the Point by the assistance of Ben and the soldiers. We pitched our tents on a convenient spot near the shore, and tethered our horses around us in the midst of grass which reached nearly to their knees.

On the following morning I went on board the schooner, and ordered on shore a tomahawk and a suit of slop clothes, which I had promised to my friend Ben, and in which he was immediately dressed. They consisted of a short blue jacket, a checked shirt, and a pair of dark trousers. He strutted about in them with an air of good-natured importance, declaring that all the harbour and country adjoining belonged to him. "I tumble down pickaninny here," he said, meaning that he was born there. "Belonging to me all about, massa; pose you tit down here, I gib it to you." "Very well," I said: "I shall sit down here." "Budgerree," (very good,) he replied, "I gib it to you;" and we shook hands in ratification of the friendly treaty.

Having understood that there was no land about the harbour calculated to form a settlement upon, our object was to proceed up the river, called by the natives "Karuah," which discharges itself into the harbour on the opposite or northern side of it.

We were joined in the morning by a launch which Captain Allman, the commandant at Newcastle kindly sent to our assistance, and we determined to proceed the same afternoon up the river with the launch and a small boat, leaving the schooner to follow us. There were

several natives at this time in the harbour, and as soon as they saw the vessels lying at anchor, some of them came paddling off in their little bark canoes from the opposite side (a distance of several miles) to visit us. A native called Tony, who had previously made his acquaintance with the soldiers, was recommended to accompany us with Ben up the river, and having accepted of my proposals, we started after dinner, and proceeded across the harbour, (about six miles in that direction,) leaving several of our attendants behind to take care of the horses.

We encamped that evening on the banks of the river, about fourteen miles from Soldiers' Point. Having proceeded the next day as far as the river was navigable for the schooner, I fixed upon a spot which I thought would answer for a temporary settlement, and accordingly had the stores landed from the schooner and deposited under an officer's tent, guarded by the mechanic, Dan Joy, who had received them in charge from the Company's store in Sydney.

After several days' examination of the country on foot, we returned to Soldiers' Point, first leaving such a number of persons up the river as were necessary to protect themselves against any attack from the natives, should such an event occur.

In crossing the harbour in the evening, on our way back, I was much struck with the beauty of the scenery on the north side, and could not help suspecting, from the appearance of the country, that I had been deceived in the representations given of it. I therefore proposed to Mr. Harrington, to visit that side on the following morning. Accordingly, soon after daylight we left the Point, and landed near the spot which had

attracted my attention the preceding evening. We should have been at no loss here for an ample breakfast, even had we not provided ourselves with one, from the abundance of oysters that covered the rocks near which we landed.

We were now accompanied by the native Tony, who, after assisting to boil our kettle and fry our bacon, seasoned our repast with a supply of roasted oysters. The water in the harbour this morning, under the influence of a bright sun, was glassy as the smoothest lake, and the whole range of scenery was rendered romantically beautiful by the softer shades of the more distant and thickly timbered hills which skirted the harbour, and by the several small islands which lay in the midst of the still clear waters. The silence of this delightful spot was broken only by sounds which added to its interest, and which arose from the gentle splashings caused by the undulations of the tide against the rocks on which we sat, and the gay whistlings of the magpies in the open forest behind us.

After breakfast we set out to see as much of the country as we were able. We had not been out long before a beautiful bird, very like a pheasant in its plumage and tail, though not so beautiful, flew out of the long grass and perched itself upon a tree, when I immediately shot it. I understood afterwards that it was known in the colony as the *swamp pheasant*, which inhabits the shores near the sea, and which is extremely rare, disappearing always when the country becomes settled. It appeared to subsist upon grasshoppers, for on opening its stomach it was found to be filled with them. Its flesh, when cooked, was tender, and resembled more the flavour of the woodcock than that of any other game.

Before we left this side of the harbour, I became convinced our stores ought to have been landed here, and at once determined to remove them hither, by recalling the schooner, which had by this time anchored in the outer harbour, on her return to Sydney.

After spending a pleasant day upon this very interesting excursion, we returned to Soldiers' Point, recalled the schooner on the following morning, and sent her again up the river, where we appointed to meet her on a certain day. The next duty was to convey our horses across the harbour to the shore immediately opposite, which we did with considerable difficulty, by the assistance of the government launch, and we then formed our encampment on that side, from which our whole party departed the next day, to join the schooner at the head of the navigable river.

During this journey we passed over about twenty miles of country, some parts of which were of a very inferior description, and others of better quality. The forest was every where open and grassy, and free from brushwood; but generally thickly timbered with tall trees, both in the vallies and on the tops of the highest hills.

The natives, Tony and Ben, accompanied us, and also two other natives: the first had his gin, (wife,) who carried her little boy, about twelve months old, astride on her shoulders, while the little black urchin fastened his fingers in her hair to prevent himself from falling. They were all three as naked as when they were born, and appeared to suffer no inconvenience from the want of covering—such is the luxurious nature of the climate.

On our journey we fell in with a wild, fierce-looking man, about the middle age, with two slender, interesting-

looking youths, named Wandoman and Booramee, apparently about twelve years of age. The old man was armed with a long spear ; his beard was short and bushy like his hair, and his body naked ; while he had placed in his girdle of twisted opossum fur, which he wore around his loins, an iron tomahawk and a large piece of half-roasted kangaroo flesh. The trio were wandering in search of the rest of their tribe, who had moved to the beach ; and as Tony belonged to the same tribe, I requested him to invite the strangers to join us. This was done in their own language, they being unable to speak a single word of English. The invitation was immediately accepted, and we proceeded together on our journey. I was much pleased to find that every considerable brook and hill had a name ; and as the old man was conversant with them all, I made memoranda of their names, shapes, and positions, to assist my recollection if I should hereafter examine the country more minutely, or be at any time lost in that quarter of the forest when alone.

After two days' journey we arrived at the station where we had left the party, and found the schooner waiting for us. In the evening my attention was drawn to the old native by one of our men, who had observed him while sitting at the fire, in the act of sharpening his spear. " Look at that old man, sir," said the white man : " do you think he means any good by that ?" I answered, that I had no idea he meant any harm. I however watched his movements, and observed that he scraped the point of his spear, which was at least about eight feet long, with a broken shell, and put it in the fire to harden. Having done this, he drew the spear over the blaze of the fire repeatedly, and then placed it

between his teeth, in which position he applied both his hands to straighten it, examining it afterwards with one eye closed, as a carpenter would do his planed work. The dexterous and workmanlike manner in which he performed his task, interested me exceedingly; while the savage appearance and attitude of his body, as he sat on the ground before a blazing fire in the forest, with a black youth seated on either side of him, watching attentively his proceedings, formed as fine a picture of savage life as can be conceived. As soon as he had put his spear in order, he left the fire with the two boys, without saying a word or appearing to notice any one, and they immediately disappeared in the forest. Not being then aware that they could approach a kangaroo sufficiently near to kill it with a spear, I must confess I felt some anxiety to learn what they were about, and accordingly applied to Tony upon the subject, who informed me that they were gone to look for a kangaroo; and I was also for the first time informed by Tony's gin, Louisa, that the old man was her father, and the two boys her brothers.

At twilight the old man returned alone, and informed Tony that he had speared a kangaroo, which was so heavy he could not bring it home, and requested that the white men might go and assist them. Suspicion still attached to the old man, who they supposed might have formed a stratagem to decoy them into the forest and spear them. A party, however, was soon formed, each with a loaded musket, and after proceeding about a mile, the old man led them to the spot where he had slain a kangaroo, of a size exceeding any thing which we had before seen. The animal was brought to the station,

and served on the following day to supply the whole party with food.

It was now arranged that Mr. Harrington, Mr. Dangar, and the Company's surveyor, Mr. Armstrong, with a suitable party of men and two natives, should be supplied with stores for five or six weeks; that they should proceed to examine the distant country, while I determined to return with the vessel and the remainder of the party to the harbour, where my object was to fix upon a spot for the early settlement of the whole of the Company's establishment, which I was exceedingly anxious to remove from the contaminating influence of the society in the neighbourhood of Retreat Farm. As soon, therefore, as matters could be arranged we separated, when I returned to the harbour.

After several days of careful search and anxious reflection, I selected a spot, upon which we began to construct a number of small huts (made with poles and bark) for the reception of the families when they should arrive.

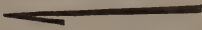
Tony had returned with us from the river; but the old man and his sons had left us to join their friends on the beach, whither they were going when we met them. I desired Tony to tell him that I should be glad to see the whole tribe at Port Stephens: that I intended to remain there, and would protect them from the cedar-cutters, (who had a bad character amongst them,) and take care that nobody should hurt them: that if they would sit down with me as my brothers, I would also be a brother to them, and would give them food and clothing, and lend them muskets to shoot kangaroos with. At parting I supplied the old man and boys with bread and tobacco,

and presented a tomahawk to each. We thus separated, with every demonstration of kind feeling and confidence on both sides.

As soon as we had raised the frames of some of our intended habitations, we were sadly at a loss for bark to close the sides and cover the roofs with. Ben and Tony being now the only natives present, they could not do all that was required; and the former, therefore, made an offer to go in search of the tribe and bring them to me, promising to return in two days with such a number as would soon finish all our huts. This promise he faithfully kept by bringing, within the prescribed time, a dozen good-natured, able-bodied friends, who having received each a small hatchet, set to work in good earnest, and brought such a quantity of bark in two or three days as would have taken our party a month to procure.

Before a white man can strip the bark beyond his own height, he is obliged to cut down the tree; but a native can go up the smooth and branchless stems of the tallest trees, to any height, by cutting notches in the surface large enough only to place the great toe in, upon which he supports himself, while he strips the bark quite round the tree, in lengths from three to six feet. These form temporary sides and coverings for huts of the best description.

In some cases I observed that the natives placed a forked stick slanting from the ground to the tree, (with the fork resting against the body of the tree,) eight or ten feet from the earth, while the other end was stuck in the ground. Upon the forked part of the pole they mounted, and performed their work in less than half the time that a white man could have done it upon *terra*

firma. I observed too, that they used a stick, shaped thus , called the *hornerah*, (which assists them in throwing the spear,) with which they peel the bark after having made the incision with their hatchets. The edge of this instrument is thin and sharpish at the flat end, and well calculated for the work.

Having soon peeled all such trees in the immediate vicinity of the huts as afforded the kind of bark suitable for our purpose, the natives ascended the hills at the back of the huts, and were frequently seen descending in parties, with immense sheets of bark on their heads. These pieces being very supple in their fresh state, frequently covered the bodies of those who carried them more than half way down to the hips.

Whatever difficulties I might have to encounter, in the first instance, from the wants, restless dispositions, and complaints of the white population, of almost every age and sex, whom I was about immediately to introduce to this now peaceful place, I felt no ordinary degree of pleasure and relief on experiencing such prompt and effective assistance from the natives ; and the more so as I had been warned, when at Sydney, against the savage and treacherous conduct of the tribes, who were said to be more ferocious and mischievous in this spot than in any other known part of the colony.

Such a character of the natives led me, on our first acquaintance, to watch their dispositions and actions more closely than I should have done, and to make very particular enquiries amongst them as to the feelings which they entertained of the parties who had introduced themselves on cedar-cutting speculations up the several rivers and streams which discharge themselves into the

harbour. The accounts which they gave were disgusting and even terrible. Several boys and women were shown to me whose fathers and husbands had been shot by these marauders for the most trifling causes : one, for instance, for losing a kangaroo dog, which had been lent him for the purpose of supplying the white savages with game. It was reasonable to suppose that such conduct as this would prevent their further intercourse with the white people, and that they would seek revenge, either openly or otherwise, for such injuries ; but the conduct which followed my treatment of the old man and his family, and the invitation of Tony, accepted by the blacks now about us, proved them to be naturally a harmless people, and desirous to seek rather than to shun the society of white persons, as soon as they saw a disposition to treat them with humanity.

The old man had evidently been favourably impressed with what he had experienced, for a few days only after Tony's return with a party, several canoes with natives and their families were seen paddling across the water towards us, from the opposite side of an adjoining cove. Amongst them were the old man and his two sons, who immediately came with smiling countenances to me and shook hands. I made much of them by all the signs in my power, patting the old man on the shoulders in token of regard, while he nodded and simpered, uttering the word, " ees, ees, ees," which I understood to mean *yes*, in a tone that indicated he felt soothed and gratified. I presented every one of these fresh visitors with a tomahawk, and on their being given to understand that they must put aside their spears, they immediately took them to the spot where the rest of their friends had been

encamped on the side of the shore, and placed them against a tree, with those of the others who were cutting and carrying bark.

At night I fed them with Indian corn and flour, both of which they were fond of; and I applauded them heartily as they danced around a blazing fire, according to their custom upon all joyful occasions.

Having put a certain number of huts in such a state of forwardness as justified my leaving the party, and feeling assured of the friendship of the natives, whose expectations concerning us appeared now to have been raised to the highest pitch, I resolved to leave five of the white men with the natives to finish the buildings, while I returned to Sydney for the whole establishment.

Previous, however, to my departure, I gave orders that Ben should proceed with two white men, in a boat, at a certain period, with a supply of provisions, to a place on the banks of the river Myall, in the hope of meeting the other party on their return, as had been previously arranged.

I had great confidence in the judgment and good feelings of two out of the five men left behind, who appeared no less desirous than myself of conciliating the natives, and who displayed all the zeal in every respect that could be desired. In their hands, therefore, I left this part of the Company's interest, until my return from Sydney with the various families and the requisite means for establishing them on this spot, for a time at least, if not permanently.

Before quitting, however, I made a small garden near where my tent had first been pitched, fronting the harbour, on a little mount, having planted various seeds,

some of which I calculated would arrive at perfection soon after my return ; and even if I should be disappointed in this, still the appearance of English vegetation would, I knew, afford a pleasurable feeling on the first arrival of the people, and yield an early specimen of the capabilities of the soil. Such things as these may appear trifles to those who have never experienced the effects of banishment to a spot where nature's wilds alone present themselves on every side ; but my anxiety was great to adopt any measure that would be likely to inspire confidence in the drooping and desponding minds of some of my numerous charge in their new abode, where they would at first find little to excite favourable expectations, and where their wants would necessarily be many and their accommodations few.

On my arrival in Sydney I chartered a brig of about two hundred tons, for the purpose of transporting the whole of the establishment to the spot which I had just left, and having loaded her with stores of all descriptions, implements, provisions, oxen, wether sheep, poultry, dogs, and, in short, every thing within my reach which could conduce to the comfort and success of the undertaking, I despatched the carts as before, to remove the families from the Retreat to the brig, leaving one man and his wife in charge of the Farm. The weather being fine, the travellers suffered none of the inconveniences experienced upon the former journey. On the 21st of February, 1826, the brig left Sydney Cove, crowded both above and between decks with various denominations of living creatures, destined to lay the foundation of an establishment, of the future results of which no mean expectations had been formed by us all. We were accompanied by an

open launch of about twelve tons, which contained various articles that could not be stowed in the brig.

We sailed from the harbour with a gentle breeze and an unclouded sun. Men, women, and children were seen dozing and sleeping, during the voyage, under an awning on the quarter-deck, few venturing to encounter the heat below. The fruits of the season, such as peaches and oranges, were brought on board in profusion by the women and children, and although it was a scene of great confusion, still the feelings excited by change, and the thirst for novelty, (which was especially apparent in the minds of the women and the more juvenile adventurers, with reference to their new home,) served to keep up their spirits, and to render this short voyage much more agreeable than there had been reason to anticipate.

At twelve o'clock on the 23d of February, 1826, and in thirty hours after leaving Port Jackson, we cast anchor about a mile from the shore in the inner harbour of Port Stephens. As soon as we appeared we were saluted with the firing of muskets by the party on shore, who came off to us as soon as practicable to congratulate their friends, and to inform them of the progress that had been made in providing for their accommodation on shore.

I should remark, that as we entered the outer harbour, we saw at a distance Mr. Dangar in the boat with Ben and the two men I had ordered up the river before I left Port Stephens. I felt great anxiety and alarm on seeing him alone with the men, fearing that some misfortune had occurred to the party.

The boat was soon alongside of us, when I was happy to learn that all the party were safe; but that the two natives who had accompanied them had become frightened

at the idea of meeting strange natives, and had run away from them about the middle of their journey, and that two of the horses, which had become tired and unable to proceed, had been left in the forest about fifty miles off. Mr. Harrington and the rest of the party he said were returning with their horses by land; and as we were gliding to an anchorage, we had a perspective view of his party and the pack-horses, on their return, descending a small eminence towards the tent which stood near the shore.

Almost at the same moment too the birth of a child was announced on board. These concurring incidents, together with the calm beauty of the scenery, heightened by the effects of a cloudless sun, and the anxious cares with which my mind was occupied, rendered my situation at that moment as full of excitement as could well be experienced.

Before we attempted to land any of the passengers, the cattle, six in number, were slung over the side of the ship, and towed ashore by the boat; and the sheep, dogs, and poultry, were sent to a small island separated from the main land by a channel about a quarter of a mile wide.

The charter-party gave me the right of detaining the brig for a certain period for the accommodation of the women and children, in case I should require it. I was aware that complaints would be made, with apparent reason, if they were forced on shore and exposed to all the inconveniences of such a situation without any resource; and although I was pretty certain that not one of them would stay on board a moment longer than they could help, still I felt I could always answer any complaint, by referring them back to the brig for a time, if

they were dissatisfied with the bark huts as they found them.

As I anticipated, none chose to stay on board; and as soon therefore as it could be arranged, they were all landed the same afternoon with their baggage, at a short distance from the spot where the huts had been constructed.

The natives who had promised to look out for the "corbon," (great) ship, had now a very considerable accession of numbers; and on the landing of the party they came to the spot under the guidance of the two white men, Joy and Summons, to offer their assistance in carrying the trunks and other baggage to the respective huts which I had appointed for each family.

Previous to their arrival at Port Stephens our newcomers had never seen a native; their surprise, therefore, on finding themselves surrounded by such a body of them may be easily imagined. It was to me both curious and gratifying to see some of those harmless beings joining in parties to carry up the heavy trunks that were landed on the beach, while others took the small packages and bundles on their heads with the greatest cordiality, and quite as handily as any body of white men in the colony could have done. By their assistance the families were soon all under cover, and before night, appeared to have arranged themselves in their bark habitations in such a manner and with such good temper as afforded a prospect of their soon making themselves comfortable in their new abodes. I pitched my tent on an elevated spot at a short distance from them, in a situation which commanded a view of the harbour and some of the surrounding country.

The accounts which Messrs. Harrington, Dangar, and

Armstrong, gave me of the country they had examined, were of a favourable nature, so that I had reasonable hopes that Port Stephens would become the permanent settlement of the Australian Agricultural Company.

On the following morning I made arrangements for the unloading of the brig, and the safe deposit of the stores and implements on shore. I fixed upon a spot by the side of a small creek, where there was sufficient depth of water to admit the open craft that had been purchased at Sydney, and here I ordered all the stores to be landed. I then went there with some of the natives, who pulled large quantities of long grass which grew near the spot, and with which we covered the casks and other materials as they were landed, in such a manner as protected them from the effects of the sun as well as the rain, should the latter immediately come on. About a week was occupied in performing this important service, and as it was chiefly done by the natives under Joy and Summons, the great body of the white inhabitants could be spared to occupy themselves in making their huts more comfortable, and in providing the best accommodations for their families which circumstances would admit.

As soon as the brig had been unloaded and the stores safely deposited, a site was marked out for the erection of a store, fifty feet long, to be constructed with permanent materials. For this purpose several large trees were felled and split up into slabs, twelve or fourteen feet in length. A strong frame-work was next prepared from the forest, and in a very short space a substantial building arose on the banks of the creek, capable of containing all the perishable and valuable stores. Until a more permanent roof could be prepared, bearers were thrown across

the building, and a stack of grass built upon them, protected by a thatch of the same materials, like a common hay-stack. A bench of rough materials was constructed within the building to serve as a counter; and I appointed our bricklayer, who was a trusty and an ingenious man, to take charge of the store until a clerk, or some other proper person, should be appointed.

While this was going on, another party was employed in constructing a square punt, with some deals we had brought with us from England. A third was engaged in making a stock-yard for the cattle, and a place to harness the working oxen in. A fourth in splitting timber and making hurdles for the sheep, when they should arrive overland. Another party was employed in making a garden of considerable extent, in the most suitable spot that could be found, while two men were occupied for a time in constructing a kennel for the dogs and houses for the poultry, and in attending to the wethers I had brought, to prevent our people from living entirely on salt provisions.

As soon as I could be relieved from the numerous calls upon my attention at the establishment, I made short excursions into the country surrounding the harbour, with a view of selecting proper places for the imported sheep, &c. Here again I was indebted to the natives, who acted as my guides upon every occasion, not only when on horseback, but also in the boat, in which they frequently rowed me up the rivers and various creeks, accompanied often by only one white person. So good an understanding subsisted between us, and so proud were they of the notice I had taken of them, that had it been necessary, I should have had no

hesitation in trusting myself alone with them in any situation. The assistance which I derived from them, whether as guides or labourers, exceeded any thing I can describe; and the satisfaction this afforded me, as well as the pleasure I received in the society of these cheerful and obliging people, supported me greatly in the daily performance of the arduous and anxiously responsible duties which I had taken upon myself.

An accident having occurred to the launch, by means of which we hoped occasionally to communicate with Sydney, it became necessary either to abandon her, or to put her in a state of repair. I determined upon the latter; and our carpenter undertook, with the assistance of an experienced sailor belonging to the establishment, to sheath and deck her, as well as to give her entire new masts, rigging, and sails. This service was satisfactorily performed, after some trouble, without other assistance or materials than those we had on the spot, when she was launched as a new craft, and called, "The Balberook," after the native name of the cove in which she was repaired and refitted. I gave the command of her to the seaman under whose directions the work had been performed. All parties appeared proud of this performance at so early a period; and especially as it made us more independent, and gave us the means of ordering and receiving such supplies and conveniences as we might be deficient of in the Company's store at Port Stephens, without reference to other and more uncertain conveyances.

Considerable pleasure was expressed as soon as we saw the little schooner, with her white sails unfurled, beating for the first time out of the harbour. The com-

position of her crew was rather remarkable, as containing two white men with two natives, Crosely and Sinbad, who had already made several voyages in a coasting craft from Newcastle to Sydney. The master was quite satisfied to receive them as a part of his crew, and before they went on board I gave them a suitable dress. I had however no idea that they would be constant in the employment; this was too much to expect from men brought up in such wild and independent habits; but their services were valuable at the moment, when every man was of great importance to me; and I considered it as much a duty as it was a pleasure to favour every inclination I saw towards civilization, while it tended also to maintain and encourage a good understanding between us. I felt that the calls both of humanity and policy were involved in the intercourse between the natives and such a body of inhabitants as we were, and that the proper management of the blacks as well as the whites was therefore not one of the least anxious of my duties.

We had not been long at Port Stephens before six cows with calves and some working oxen were announced to have arrived at Soldiers' Point. I had ordered this purchase to be made at Hunter's River before I left Sydney; and as at that time no other road from Newcastle to Port Stephens was known than by the beach, I was exceedingly puzzled to know how to get the cattle across the harbour. However, at sunrise I took a party of natives in a boat with several of the most expert of our men, towing the square punt. As soon as we had landed and breakfasted, which we did partly on some fish procured for us by the natives, we proceeded to

make a pound to catch the cattle in, by nailing poles to such trees in the forest as stood near enough to serve the place of posts. We had succeeded only in roping two, when the others broke down our rails, and escaped like so many deer. I called the natives to assist in stopping them; but they were so terrified that they scampered off to the trees, which they climbed like scared monkeys. When they felt themselves out of danger they sat in the branches, laughing and shouting in broken English, to direct their white friends which way to run to recover the cattle. Nor could they be persuaded for a long time to leave their exalted places of retreat; and when they did, they were up again the instant they saw the cattle making any attempts to bolt. We were occupied in this troublesome business no less than four successive days, the cattle repeatedly breaking away and becoming more wild at each attempt to secure them. At length they were all carried over excepting four, which, together with several calves, had been made fast in the punt, which the boat had towed about half-way over, when one of the beasts became restive and upset it. This occasioned a scene of sad confusion, and I felt mortified enough, after all the trouble I had taken. The man who had charge of the boat jumped upon the punt, which lay bottom upwards, and cut the lashings of the beasts, which were struggling with their heads out of water. As soon as they were liberated one of them swam back to the shore where I was standing, while the others were driven before the boat to the opposite land. The cows on that side no sooner saw their companions in the water, than two of them jumped in to meet them: the boatman drove one of them back,

but the other escaped him, and seemed determined to reach the place at which it had been separated from its calf. The distance was above a mile, and as the tide was going out, the poor animal in crossing got into a strong current, and was carried out to sea and drowned. As soon as it became alarmed it made several attempts to reach the shore on both sides, bellowing piteously every time it failed, as if sensible of its hopeless situation.

Every effort to recover the ox which had returned proved ineffectual. He was now alone, and had become so wild as to defy every attempt to impound him; I therefore had him shot, and his carcase cut up and carried home in the boat to the establishment.

The introduction of the cows was to the families, and especially to those who had young children, an event which promised great satisfaction; so much so, that I thought no trouble too great to procure them at such a crisis. To show in all cases, however trifling, an earnest disposition to do all that my situation could admit of to render their isolated abode comfortable, I knew was the only way to gain and secure the confidence of so large a body of people, who looked to me for the supply of every want. Indeed, it was my duty as well as interest to secure their confidence; for without their willing support, it was obviously impossible for me, in such a situation, to carry into effect any of the objects I had in view.

As I was passing through the bark village, one morning previous to the arrival of the cows, I was accosted by one of the women who had taken a fit of melancholy at her situation. "I hope, sir," she said, in a piteous

tone, "you will never think of bringing Mrs. Dawson to such a place as this." To which I answered that I certainly did, and that I was sure she would be very much pleased with it.

"Oh dear!" she exclaimed, "pleased with what? For my part, I never was so unhappy before as I am now. I would not, for the best thousand pounds that ever was made, have left England, if I had known I was to have come to such a place as this." I told her she would soon think differently, and left her sighing and murmuring at what she felt her desolate situation. Her husband soon after called upon me, and represented that his wife was in a low melancholy way, and could not make herself satisfied where she was. As soon as the cows arrived I sent for him, and informed him that I had discovered a cure for his wife, which was to give her the charge of the cows; and as this had always been her employment at home, I had no doubt she would soon be herself again. I was not deceived in this; for as soon as a proper place could be constructed for milking, and a temporary dairy erected adjoining her hut, she cheerfully took the management upon herself, and I never heard more of her melancholy; on the contrary, she always appeared contented and happy.

Just before the brig left the harbour, the captain and his mate made an attempt to carry off a young woman, the daughter of one of our shepherds, who was proceeding over the mountains with the sheep, and who had left her in charge of his two younger children. Having received a hint of their intentions, I swore in several fresh constables, and ordered them, with other assistance, to watch at the landing-place all night. One of the

constables came to my tent in the middle of the night, to inform me that they had taken the captain and one of his mates, after a severe struggle, in which the latter had attempted to use his pistols. I ordered them to be detained till the morning, and then to be brought before me. The two sailors who had rowed him ashore, and who had escaped during the scuffle, immediately went back to the brig, from whence they returned to the shore with the greater part of the crew, to rescue their captain. On their landing, however, they were immediately overpowered, and held as prisoners till the morning. The captain having landed in a clean white dress, and having been well rolled in the dirt during the scuffle, the constable in charge, at his request, allowed him to send on board at daylight, for a clean white jacket and trowsers, and took him in the mean time to his hut near the shore, where he gave him some refreshment. He was at length put upon his parole of honour; but no sooner had the boat arrived, than he bounded into it, and ordered his men to pull off. The constable, however, who was close after him, knocked him over the side of the boat with his staff, and dragged him unceremoniously ashore, bleeding, and well soused with mud and water. The result of all this was a severe broken head to the captain, a written apology from him for the outrage, and the instant removal of his brig from the harbour.

After the dwellings of the families had been made comfortable, and some articles of common furniture provided for their use, the attention of the men was turned to enclosing and cultivating small gardens adjoining their huts. The seeds which I had planted in the first instance had proved the capacity of the soil by the pro-

duction of cucumbers, radishes, and cabbages. But the shores of the harbour, in almost every quarter, produced spontaneously and in great abundance, a vegetable called the sea-spinach, which when boiled in two separate portions of water, was found to be superior to the common English plant of that name, and formed as fine a dish of vegetables as I desired to see upon the table.

The natives supplied the inhabitants with abundance of fish in return for tobacco, flour, and bread; and they were seen at all times during the day, both men and women, carrying buckets of water on their heads, from a spring which was resorted to for the general supply.

During all this time the Company's surveyor was employed in surveying and taking soundings of the harbour, while I was making short excursions into the country, returning every evening to attend to the various calls of the people around me, as well as to the numerous plans that were to form the foundation of future proceedings, upon a very large and progressively increasing scale. At the end of five or six weeks the arrival of my nephew was announced with the imported sheep and cattle, which he had conducted from Retreat Farm over the Blue Mountains, a distance of nearly two hundred miles: he was above five weeks in performing this journey, amidst obstacles and privations inseparable from a first passage over a new, untravelled, and mountainous country. He arrived at my tent with his bare toes protruding through his worn-out shoes and stockings, and presenting the appearance, in other respects, of a wandering, half-starved vagrant.

I had been compelled by the committee at Sydney,

against my conviction and remonstrances, thus to send the sheep overland, when they might so easily and so expeditiously have been conveyed by water. The journey too was much longer than my nephew, who was a stranger to the country, had anticipated; and before he arrived, his provisions were exhausted, and both himself and his men were obliged for several days to live upon very short allowance. We felt greatly mortified at the disastrous effects of this injudicious land-journey, upon valuable ewes forward with lamb, which it had cost us so much trouble and solicitude to preserve during a long voyage from England. Stations had been selected and preparations made for the accommodation of the sheep when they arrived; and as we had a short time previously received an assignment of seventeen convicts from the government, I was in a situation to provide for these flocks, without detaching the married men to a distance from their families.

As the children now on the grant amounted to upwards of forty, I felt it incumbent upon me to provide instruction for them; and I therefore selected from amongst these seventeen convicts a man to act as school-master, who had been an assistant in a school in Dublin. A temporary building was immediately erected, with forms and desks in proper order; and the school was well attended by the children, and attentively managed by the master, who conducted himself extremely well in all respects.

Business of almost every description was now fast multiplying on my hands. Several additional parties of convicts arrived in succession, and a spot near the Port was fixed upon for cultivation, as soon as other indis-

pensable objects admitted of a detachment sufficiently strong being sent to clear the ground. There was a party of twenty-one young rogues from London and Dublin sent to me amongst the rest, in consequence (as a member of the committee expressed it) of their being "quite unmanageable in Sydney." As a letter containing this information preceded their arrival, I felt myself much indebted for this *very considerate and judicious selection*, in addition to other novelties around me. This precious importation arrived in May, 1826. Two of them, on the voyage from Sydney, drew their knives upon the crew of the schooner hired to convey them, and they were in consequence put in irons, and confined between decks. On the first landing of the party, some of them were detected stealing sugar from a bag, as they were receiving their rations at the store; and on the following morning they all mutinied, and refused to turn out to work. Three of the ringleaders were immediately punished and returned to the government, and the others were distributed in the huts amongst the convict men, whom they began also to rob of a part of their clothes and rations; when the men, without making complaints to me, took the law into their own hands, and being chiefly Irishmen, they "belaboured" them, as they called it, with their little bits of switches, till they no longer dared to act dishonestly or disobediently amongst their companions.

A short time after this, however, the corporal's guard was removed from Soldiers' Point on the opposite shore, and stationed on our side the water, for the better protection of the settlement.

Having constructed as many temporary buildings as

were necessary for our immediate wants, I now commenced preparations for making bricks and burning lime, in order that our future buildings might be permanently useful, and that our labour should no longer be wasted, beyond necessity, in making erections with such fragile materials as poles and bark. A fine quarry of stone having been discovered on the water's edge, not far from the settlement, our movements began to assume altogether an aspect of business regularity. A bell for announcing the hours of labour was suspended from a high tree, which served also to toll the establishment together on Sundays, when prayers were always read by myself or my nephew, under the shade of a tree, around which several felled trees were arranged as seats. The free people were placed on one side and the convicts on the other: the latter were attended by several constables appointed from their own body, all being under the superintendence of the bricklayer, who acted as chief constable as well as store-keeper. This practice was continued for many months, until a large and substantial joiner's shop was erected, when the Sunday's duty was performed in that building, which was capacious enough for all the persons on the establishment, who amounted to several hundreds.

The Catholic part of the convict-population, although they made no objection to attend the Protestant service in the open air, objected to enter any building where it was performed. In consequence of this, I allowed an Italian Catholic, who was a free tradesman and a very deserving man, to perform the service of their own church to them in the smithy, where it was always conducted with great regularity and propriety.

Our little schooner made several quick and useful voyages to Sydney; and as we required coals for the smithy, which was now briskly at work with three forges, she was dispatched to Newcastle for a cargo, and returned safely with it to Port Stephens.

An incident, however, occurred at Newcastle upon that occasion, which I cannot avoid here mentioning. The master of the schooner and his convict-assistant got drunk, and left the harbour in a state quite unfit to manage the vessel. They proceeded however to sea, but had not got out of sight of the port before they were both unable to keep their legs, and stowed themselves away in their berths, leaving the vessel entirely to the two natives, Crosely and Sinbad, who immediately put her about and brought her safely back to the harbour again, where she remained till the following day. I questioned the blacks upon the subject, after I had heard of it; but they both hung down their heads and denied it, smiling and leering at each other at the same time, evidently afraid of betraying the secret which their white masters had enjoined them to keep; and I never could make them acknowledge it afterwards, although I promised to take no notice of it to the master. Crosely invariably answered my questions with "No, sir; no!" in a very expressive tone, and with a sly laugh at the end of it. The fact, however, did not admit of a doubt, as it was witnessed and related to me by several respectable persons; but it would not, under more doubtful authority, have been incredible to me, because I had already had evidences of their capacity in other respects. It is also a singular fact, that they took it by turns alternately, when at Sydney, to remain on board the schooner, under the

secret instructions of the master, to see that the convict-sailor on board neither robbed the vessel himself, nor allowed any one else to do it when the master was on shore; and in no instance were they ever known to be unfaithful to their trust.

The little vessel, however, was not destined long to be useful to us, for on her return from her second voyage to Newcastle, where she had taken in a cargo of Indian corn, she foundered at sea, and went down near the heads of the harbour of Port Stephens, and so suddenly that the crew had scarcely time to take to their boat, in which, after many perils, they arrived at the settlement. Neither of the natives were on board: one of them had remained at Port Stephens; and the other, in consequence of a foul wind, was dispatched by the master overland from Newcastle with English letters, which had been forwarded from Sydney by a small vessel hired for the purpose of supplying us with provisions. This vessel was also lost a few days before off Newcastle, and little was saved besides her crew and letters. The preservation of my letters under these successive disasters served to lighten, in some degree, the unpleasant intelligence of our losses; and as they were from my family in England, from whom I had been so long absent, my friend Sinbad was a truly welcome messenger. He delivered to me the precious packet about eleven o'clock at night, just as the news reached me of the loss of both the schooners; and he congratulated himself, in his own peculiar manner and language, upon his fortunate absence from the Balberook when she went down.

In the midst of our toils and trials at Port Stephens, a circumstance took place in the month of June which I shall here narrate, with a few introductory observations.

It was formerly the custom of the government to grant licences to parties to cut timber in the unoccupied districts; and as cedar was the most valuable wood then known in the colony, persons in Sydney were in the habit of sending parties of men to every navigable river on the coast, before the country about it was known to any one else. The timber-cutting parties therefore were the first people who came in contact with the natives in the neighbourhood of the sea; and as they were composed of convicts and other people not remarkable either for humanity or honesty, the communication was not at all to the advantage of the poor natives, or subsequently to the settlers who succeeded those parties.

In the first instance the natives generally show fear, and symptoms of hostility towards strangers occupying their country, although little difficulty is experienced in conciliating them, to those who are rightly disposed and take the proper steps to accomplish it. Previous to my occupation of the Company's grant, several cedar-cutting parties had established themselves beyond the head of the two principal navigable rivers and their branches, which discharge themselves into the harbour at Port Stephens. On my arrival I learnt from the natives that one party was still at work at a considerable distance up the country, at the source of one of the rivers, called by the natives "Myall," meaning, in their language, Stranger, or a place which they seldom or never frequent. I learned also, that the natives there were exceedingly hostile towards the white men, with whom they had once been upon good terms, and that acts of violence had been committed on both sides. One of the consequences was, that the natives inflicted vengeance upon almost every white man

they came in contact with, and as convicts were frequently running away from the penal settlement of Port M^cQuarie to Port Stephens, (a distance of about ninety miles,) numbers of them were intercepted by the natives and sometimes detained, whilst those who fell into their hands and escaped with life, were uniformly stripped of their clothes.

I had not been long at Port Stephens before I became a witness of what was going on, as several of these runaway convicts soon arrived there in the most pitiable condition, naked, wounded, and nearly starved. They all told a similar tale; that no hostility was exhibited towards them by any other tribes than those inhabiting the coast about Cape Hawke and the river Myall, near both of which the timber-cutters were at work, and that the natives were exasperated in the highest degree against them. The convicts, who delivered themselves up to me at different periods, generally represented that they owed their lives to the women who interfered in their behalf.

Soon after I arrived at Port Stephens the timber-cutting ceased, and the parties only remained there to saw up and clear away the timber which had been cut down. A superintendent of one of the parties up the Myall, who had only recently joined them, and who was a most respectable, although unfortunate settler, of the name of Pennington, came to Port Stephens in the month of June, for the purpose of informing me what had taken place between his men and the natives, and the causes of it; and also that he suspected four of his men of the murder of a native black boy named Tommy, about eight years of age, whom he had domesticated in his hut. I took his deposition, and immediately issued a warrant to apprehend

them. Two of them were soon secured and brought to Port Stephens, where they underwent an examination, upon which evidence was produced of a nature sufficiently strong to warrant me in committing them for trial at Sydney. In the latter end of August I was summoned by the attorney-general to attend their trial. This was a sad interruption to all my plans and operations, and a serious inconvenience in every respect; but as there were no means of avoiding it, I repaired the same evening on board a small vessel which the government had despatched for me, and arrived at Sydney on the 1st of September. The trial of the offenders took place several days afterwards, when they were found guilty, upon the clearest evidence, of having murdered the poor boy without the slightest provocation. To accomplish this barbarous act they enticed the lad to a lonely part of the river, where they strangled him by a narrow slip of bark, called by the natives, *curryjung*, and then threw him into the water; having, as they afterwards confessed, put him out of the way to prevent his telling tales in his communications with the natives, with whom they were at variance.

The disappearance of the boy in a sudden and mysterious manner, excited Mr. Pennington's suspicions that he had been unfairly disposed of by his men; but as any expression of such an idea would have involved his own safety, in so remote and sequestered a situation, he remained silent until a proper opportunity offered itself for investigation.

In a few days after the boy had disappeared, Mr. Pennington's notice was attracted by the noisy contention of some cows opposite his hut, about something upon

which they appeared to be feeding: this proved, on examination, to be the body of poor Tom, which the tide had floated up. Mr. Pennington having recognized the corpse had it buried; but did not dare to give a hint of his suspicions until he was able to get to Port Stephens, where he deposed to the facts before me.

The order for the execution of the murderers was suspended by the governor for above six months after they were tried and found guilty, and their fate was afterwards involved in an event which occurred at Port Stephens, and which will be detailed in its proper place.

Whilst I was at Sydney upon this trial, an opportunity occurred of sending home to my family and friends, by a private hand, a narrative of some of the principal events which had taken place from my arrival in the colony up to that period, intermixed with anecdotes of the natives, and with remarks upon their manners and customs, as far as I was then acquainted with them. The only apology which I have to offer for the introduction of it here, in the order in which it was transmitted home, is, that it was written on the spot, when the objects and their impressions were fresh in my memory.

CHAPTER II.

PRIVATE JOURNAL.

SATISFACTION ON LANDING—SYDNEY AND ITS SOCIETY—GENERAL ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY—MANNER OF TRAVELLING—ABUNDANCE OF GAME—DELIGHTFUL CLIMATE—BEAUTIES OF SCENERY—EXTREMES OF SOCIETY—ADVICE TO SETTLERS—REPTILES—THE WILD DOG—INTERCOURSE WITH NATIVES—CORROBERY—AUSTRALIANS AN INOFFENSIVE PEOPLE—PUNISHMENT INFLICTED BY NATIVES—THEIR MANNER OF FIGHTING—DEGRADED STATE OF THEIR FEMALES—THEIR AGILITY—THEIR FIDELITY—NATIVE HOSPITALITY—DIFFICULTIES AND ACCIDENTS—NATIVE MOURNING—BLACK CONSTABLES—PASSAGE UP THE RIVER MYALL—MEETING WITH NATIVES—EXPERT BOATMEN—A WOUNDED MAN—RETURN HOME OVERLAND—DISAPPEARANCE OF THE SUMPTER BLACK—EMBARRASSING SITUATION—SCANTY FARE—JOY AT DISCOVERING THE HILLS AT PORT STEPHENS—UNPLEASANT INTELLIGENCE—EFFECT ON NATIVES—THEIR ABSENCE—NATIVE CUSTOMS—EXAMINATION OF CONSTABLE—RETURN OF NATIVES—A MOTHER'S GRIEF—RECOVERY OF STOLEN ARTICLES.

You will probably have heard, before this reaches England, that we had a favourable passage, and that our stock arrived well and in fine condition, with the loss only of eighteen sheep out of seven hundred and thirty. Our seven horses and twelve cows and bulls were landed in good order. This good fortune added much to the interest of the voyage, for though greatly favoured by the weather, no little anxiety was experienced in keeping the interior of our ark in order, to preserve the lives of our

precious cargo; you may therefore imagine that I felt in no small degree relieved when we anchored in Sydney Cove.

To those who have never been on long voyages, it is not easy to describe the feelings on first seeing the land which you are destined to inhabit, after all the tossings and rollings you have suffered for many months on the dreary and trackless ocean.

From the heads (adjoining the sea) of Port Jackson to Sydney, the distance is about seven miles: the land on both sides is composed of moderately elevated hills covered with wood. The sun shone brilliantly as we glided on towards the town; the distant roll of the drum—to which the soldiers were marching from church—struck upon our ears; and the Garden of Eden, to our first parents, could not have been more enchanting than the scene was to me, heightened no doubt by the joyous feelings of a sea-worn prisoner, about to be liberated from his five months' confinement.

There had been no arrival at Sydney before us for three or four months. The inhabitants were, therefore, anxious for news. Parties of ladies and gentlemen were parading on the sides of the hills above us, greeting us every now and then, as we floated on; and as soon as we anchored, (which was on a Sunday,) we were boarded by numbers of apparently respectable people, asking for letters and news, as if we had contained the budget of the whole world. In a short time I was on shore, pleased enough, you may imagine, with the firmness of my position on earth, and with the idea that I should be able to sit down to my dinner without lashing my chair to the table, or being so often reminded of the regions between which I had sometimes imagined myself suspended.

Sydney, from the Cove, has the appearance of a con-

siderable town standing upon an eminence. The buildings, streets, &c. do not in general remind a person of its recent origin; nor is there any deficiency of accommodation and comforts there more than in a country town in England. It is increasing very fast. The small houses that the first settlers erected are every where giving way to larger structures of hewn stone, and warehouses of considerable magnitude are rising up near the water-side, indicating the prosperity of the merchants as well as the rapid increase of population. On every side of the town houses are being erected on new ground; steam-engines and distilleries are at work; so that in a short time a city will rise up in this new world equal to any thing out of Europe, and probably superior to any other which was ever created in the same space of time.

The less I say of the society the better. As in all small communities there is a jostling of interests, and a contention for precedency and power, that generate parties, which are kept alive by unprincipled individuals, who having sprung from nothing, and having no characters to lose, delight in reducing others to a level with themselves. Let it not, however, be supposed that I allude, exclusively, to those who have been involuntary exiles, some of whom, both in their dealings and general conduct, are highly respectable. The greater share, I believe, of the convertible property of the colony, rests with this class; and they therefore possess, in the various transactions of life, that degree of influence, both good and bad, which property may be supposed to give them in such a situation, and which too frequently renders them the objects of the envy and jealousy of certain of the voluntary exiles, whose principles and conduct leave them little to boast of in *any* state of society.

This country differs in some degree from the ideas I had of it from the representations made to me in England. It is not, in *general*, that picturesque and romantic country so much talked of there, although the scenery is sometimes very fine. A traveller may go many miles in a wood, even in the located districts, without seeing any traces of human habitations; and when he approaches a settler's place, he sees a house and a few straggling buildings in the centre of fifty or a hundred acres of cleared, or, more generally, of partially cleared land, surrounded by an apparently interminable wood, or trees without underwood. Occasionally houses of more important consideration are met with, surrounded by farm and other buildings, as in England, and placed in fine situations, which command views beyond the surrounding woodland; but there are not many of these above twenty miles from Sydney. There is seldom, if ever, any brushwood to be seen. Where the soil is pretty good it is lightly timbered, occasionally resembling a gentleman's park; but the traveller soon loses this idea, from finding no mansion at the end of the scene. He plods on from park to park, as it were, all day, and rests at night, with his horse tethered beside him, near some pool of water. He then strikes a light, and makes a fire to boil his kettle and fry his bacon. If he can afford a tent with a pack-horse, he will of course have one; if not, a blanket and the hard ground are his bed and covering. If it rains he strips off a sheet of bark from the nearest tree, and lies under it secure from harm. Should he get wet, he rarely takes cold, or experiences any other than a momentary inconvenience on awaking in the morning.

Since my arrival I have spent a good deal of my time in the woods, or *bush*, as it is called here. For the last

five months I have not entered or even seen a house of any kind. My habitation, when at home, has been a tent; and of course it is no better when in the bush. I have now at this place about two hundred and thirty souls lodged in bark huts, till we can get better buildings constructed; but in this climate they are comfortable enough for people who are not very fastidious. When I take an excursion in the bush, I am generally pretty well attended, and never enjoy myself more than at such times. I have several pack-horses, with tents for myself and companions when I have any, and men sufficient to accompany us, if on an expedition of importance, and where difficulties in travelling are anticipated from rivers, rocky mountains, and creeks; and two or three natives always attend as guides and interpreters. We carry as many conveniences as we can; but we have only salt provisions, unless we kill a kangaroo, an emu, or a duck. The kangaroos are too subtle and shy for us to get near, and frequently the natives will return from their sporting excursions without game, although they are as subtle as the game itself. The climate is so fine that we experience no inconvenience in travelling; and the constant change of scenery in this part of the country, and the interest kept up in expectation of making discoveries at every step, render journeys of this kind pleasant beyond description.

If we could get rid of two annoyances, and introduce two European enjoyments in lieu of them, this would be the most agreeable climate in the world. The exportation would be the musquitos and the locusts; (the latter inhabit the trees in swarms, and during summer make the most disagreeable singing noise imaginable;) the importation

would be your singing birds and cool streams. We have our singing birds too, but not like the nightingale or the blackbird. We have the thrush, very much like yours in plumage and note; and a bird, the concluding note of which is like the "*jug, jug*," of the nightingale; but they are shy singers. We have the magpie not unlike yours: it is the most constant singer, or rather whistler, of an agreeable nature, and particularly in the morning early. Parrots and parroquets, as well as black and white cockatoos, are innumerable; and the crow is here, exactly as in Europe, with a similar "*caw*," only rather hoarser and longer in its call.

The game consists of quails in abundance, the kangaroo, and emu. We have at this port great quantities of wild fowl, such as ducks, teal, &c.; also pelicans, cranes, herons, native companions, black swans innumerable, and other more curious birds, which I can neither name nor describe. Fish also abound here, including turtle, oysters, craw-fish, crabs, eels, &c. I believe we can produce every European fruit and vegetable in perfection, and most, if not all, of the tropical vegetables and fruits, more particularly in the neighbourhood of this port.

I am now writing in the midst of winter, in my tent, with a fire in front of it. The sun has risen seven mornings at least out of ten without a cloud in the horizon, and has set the same. About four, p. m. it begins to feel cold, much the same as the shutting in of a very fine clear day in England, in November. The stars twinkle at night as in a frost, and the cold reminds you that a fire is necessary for your comfort. Notwithstanding this, I have not yet seen ice, although I am told that water has sometimes been very slightly incrustated during the night.

We are near the sea here, and consequently milder in winter and cooler in summer than if further from the coast, while at the distance of twenty miles I have seen ice as thick as a dollar. I have peas now in my garden, in blossom ; and the hills about my tent are bespangled with violets, and a delicate white flower that reminds me of the snow-drop : so you may judge what the climate must be. Still the weather in winter is cold enough to the feelings to remind us, *occasionally*, of your fine dry weather in March and November with a moderate east wind, though it more frequently has the mildness of May with a clear sun. Sometimes we have refreshing showers, or heavy rains, succeeded always by fine clear weather ; and, as I have said before, seven days at least out of ten, exhibit “ the blue ethereal sky ” without a spot.

I have now seen three seasons in this country—summer, autumn, and winter. The summer is a little too hot ; but I have felt more inconvenience from hot weather in England than here : it lasts longer in this country, but you are sooner cool after exertion, and less liable to be chilled. The weather in autumn and winter is truly delightful, neither too hot nor too cold. I am told that the spring is equally agreeable ; and that, although the winters are so mild, still nature appears to undergo an invigorating change, as in colder regions. Animals lose their long coats ; flowers spring up in the gardens and fields ; birds begin to sing more generally ; and the trees, although evergreens, change their somewhat faded hue for the more refreshing green of spring.

This settlement, which is called Port Stephens, lies about one hundred and twenty miles north of the town of Sydney by water, and by the present track about two

hundred from it by land. We hope soon to find a nearer road; but I never expect to reach Sydney with less travelling than a hundred and fifty miles.

The harbour at Port Stephens is very capacious and beautiful: there is water enough to admit ships of the largest tonnage. From the entrance of the harbour to the place where I have formed this establishment, on the north shore, it is not less than eleven miles. I subjoin a bird's eye view of it.

The spot I have fixed upon for my house commands as fine views of wood and water as can be imagined: the scenery is quite Italian. As I am forming stations up the river Karuah, which is navigable about twenty-five miles from the harbour, my business will be performed in that quarter by means of boats, which will save much fatigue and jolting on horseback, besides making the excursions matter of pleasure as well as business; for in this climate nothing can be more delightful than water excursions, particularly when such fine scenery as we have about the river is constantly in view, varied at each turn of the river in a manner somewhat resembling the banks of the celebrated Wye.

The hills are every where clothed with wood to their summits, with eternal verdure beneath them, in their *natural* state, unaccompanied by brush or underwood, so that we are often reminded of gentlemen's pleasure-grounds seen from a distance; but we look in vain for the comfortable porter's lodge when we approach the solitary domain. "Ah! there's the rub!" What is fine scenery, or all the beauties which these forests present in a state of nature, when deprived of the society of those so dear to me? I often repeat to myself the lines of

Alexander Selkirk: "I am monarch of all I survey," &c. I fancy my feelings may be sometimes similar to his, though my situation is so very different. I seldom, however, look long on the gloomy side of the picture. My time is fully occupied on matters of business which are congenial to my taste and habits, and I endeavour to lay hold of every passing event with a view of turning it either to pleasure or profit; and it is astonishing what a man may do, in such a situation, towards his own happiness and that of others, if he can command his feelings, and reason fairly on man and things around him. I am surrounded here by the very dregs of civilized society, from the most civilized country in the world, intermixed by another race of beings not civilized at all; so that between these extremes and the respectable portion of mankind that left England with me, I am in a good school for the study of my own species. I have at present about a hundred and fifty convicts and emancipists, besides about eighty souls brought from England; and I trust I shall soon have a considerable accession to the different classes, as I could find employment for some hundreds if I had them.

Our sheep and cattle are thriving very well, and we are constantly making additions to them by purchases and importations of sheep, which occupy, directly and indirectly, a very large proportion, and all the best of our hands. I have every reason to believe that this undertaking will be a flourishing one, provided I am well supported. I cannot see any reason why it should not, for there are no individuals in the colony who have not succeeded in the same line, where their affairs have been conducted with common prudence and judgment. Many

failures, I know, have taken place ; but these have occurred to people who have begun and continued upon a plan not adapted to young colonists. People who come here generally imagine that they can do as in England. They take lodgings in Sydney, which is a most expensive place ; linger there to make connexions which generally end, sooner or later, in mischief ; and their money goes, they know not how. At last they fix upon a grant of land, and remove to it with inadequate means ; and before returns can be made, they have spent all their money. They then become disgusted and alarmed, mortgage their grants, and are at length *disembarrassed* of their little remains of property, by the connexion they lost so much valuable time in making at Sydney.

When a person lands at Sydney it would be better for him to go to an inn, expensive as it is, and form no acquaintances of any kind till he has taken a little time to look about him. If he has a friend in the colony he can rely upon, it is fortunate for him ; but if not, let him be cautious before he attempts to make one. He will soon learn, by enquiry, which of the settlers have more land than they can stock, and who are the most respectable of them. When he has ascertained these two things, let him purchase as many ewes as his means will enable him, before he attempts to settle, or even to select his land. Most of the latest settlers are always ready and anxious to receive sheep on their land, to feed and manage, upon their having one-third or one-fourth of the produce. Suppose they take one-third, the young settler has the other two-thirds, without a penny of expense to him ; and he thus begins to increase his income in a greater degree than he could in any other way. Whilst he is selecting

his grant, his flocks and herds (for he may do the same with cattle) are increasing beyond his personal expenditure, if he is prudent. As soon as he has fixed upon the land for his farm, let him build himself a log or a bark house, which he may do very cheaply, and make it very comfortable too. Then let him clear some land for cultivation, make a stock-yard for his cattle, enclose as large a paddock as he can for a horse or two and working oxen, and have some hurdles made for his sheep. He must also purchase a cart, plough, and set of harrows, at Sydney, where he can get them better adapted to his purposes than from England: then three oxen (if he can afford no more) and harness. With these, and other necessary articles, he must proceed to his grant; and until the enclosure alluded to is fenced off, or he becomes intimately acquainted with the country about his farm, he must tether the oxen during the night. When his hut is built, and stock-yard and hurdles made, let him bring home his sheep and cattle, with their increase, that have been upon thirds, but not before, if he wishes to avoid trouble, vexation, and losses. By the time his grant is selected, his first crop of wheat harvested, and the measures pointed out effected, it may be eighteen months or two years. During this interval his sheep and cattle will have increased; he will have had some return, from the sale of wool, without any advances but the prime cost of his sheep; and he will probably, in point of property, be as good a man then as when he landed. Upon this plan, success is certain and comparatively easy, if his land be good and well chosen. But the young settler must take care not to spend *too* much in clearing for cultivation, before the increase of his flocks justify it; for it is here

that he must look for his most certain returns. Cattle will soon be sold for their skins; and the production of grain, much beyond his own consumption, will only answer to a capitalist who can afford to hold it for a market, unless the population at Sydney should increase considerably. The soil of Australia is generally poor: some rich patches are found on the banks of rivers and in more distant parts of the coast-line. These will pay to cultivate for a market, if one exist within a reasonable distance. Both the soil and the climate, however, as far as I have yet seen, appear favourable to fine wool, which I think will ever be the staple article of New South Wales. This wool is the only production from the soil that can render it a flourishing country; and as the fine climate renders it a healthy and an agreeable one to inhabit, there is no doubt but that population will increase in proportion to the quantity and quality of the soil that may be found in situations which offer facilities for transporting its productions to a remunerating market.

Let not those who wish to proceed to Australia deceive themselves in regard to its soil and agricultural productions. They must look to *exportable* articles for an income; and they will not find them either in flesh, timber, or grain. The population will not be sufficiently dense, for many years to come, to create a home market worth the attention of settlers behind the mountains so far distant from the metropolis, Sydney; and the mere slip of country which lies between the mountains and the coast, and within distance of a market, contains but little, comparatively, worth cultivating for grain; and even this is already occupied. Fine wool must command the settler's attention, as the only exportable commodity from his

domain, for many years to come; and if he entertains other views than this, he had better stay at home.

Much has been said of venomous reptiles here. I believe they are not more common than in England. There are black and yellow snakes, whose stings are said to cause death; but accidents are seldom heard of: and I think there is no greater liability to danger than from English adders and vipers. I have seen and killed several, and imagine they would, like the vipers at home, sting if stamped upon; but they endeavour to get away from you, as any snake would in other places. One of our shepherds found a snake in his bed, which was supposed to have been attracted there by the warmth of his body, when sleeping on the ground under a tent. It did not attempt to sting him, and he killed it on the spot.

The wild dog, which is a kind of small wolf, is the largest carnivorous animal known in Australia. They are, however, more of the dog than the wolf, as has been proved by the breed becoming intermixed, in some instances, with the European dogs that generally accompany the natives in the woods. The only mischief this animal has been accused of, is that of taking young lambs, and biting sheep, as dogs have often been known to do in England.

The natives are a mild and harmless race of savages; and where any mischief has been done by them, the cause has generally arisen, I believe, in bad treatment by their white neighbours. Short as my residence has been here, I have, perhaps, had more intercourse with these people, and more favourable opportunities of seeing what they really are, than any other person in the colony. My

object has always been to conciliate them, to give them an interest in cultivating our friendship, and to afford them protection against any injuries or insults from the people on this establishment, or elsewhere, within my jurisdiction. They have usually been treated, in distant parts of the colony, as if they had been dogs, and shot by convict-servants, at a distance from society, for the most trifling causes. There has, perhaps, been more of this done near to this settlement, and on the banks of the two rivers which empty themselves into this harbour, than in any other part of the colony; and it has arisen from the speculators in timber, who formerly obtained licences from the governor to cut cedar and blue gum-wood for exportation, upon land not located.

The natives complained to me frequently, that "white pellow" (white fellows) shot their relations and friends; and showed me many orphans, whose parents had fallen by the hands of white men, near this spot. They pointed out one white man, on his coming to beg some provisions for his party up the river Karuah, who, they said, had killed ten; and the wretch did not deny it, but said he would kill them whenever he could. It was well for him that he had no white man to depose to the facts, or I would have had him off to jail at once. Having, from my first landing here, done every thing I could to prove to these poor natives that I intended to be their friend and protector, a growing confidence has been the consequence between us; till at length it has, from various circumstances, settled into a firm belief that I am, in reality, what I promised to be to them. The following circumstances will serve to show how it has been brought about, and throw more light upon their character than

any thing, perhaps, that has been said of them before. No person in this colony, has, I believe, ever had the same advantages for forming a correct judgment of the natives as myself, arising from my insulated situation, my authority as a magistrate, and the means at my disposal of employing and feeding them. It is possible, however, although I think and hope it improbable, that circumstances may occur to interrupt our good understanding ; for they are savages in the common acceptation of the term, although they exhibit stronger traits of natural gentleness and good feeling towards their white brethren, and towards each other, than people under that denomination are generally found to do. It is impossible for me to relate one half the anecdotes between the natives and myself at this place. I will, however, detail as many as I can, in order to show what they are ; and if I am too tedious, the interest I take in them must plead my excuse.

During a short residence at Port Stephens, in the month of January, and before I returned to the neighbourhood of Sydney to bring the establishment hither, I was visited by a considerable tribe of the natives, who were very friendly and desirous of further acquaintance. I encouraged this disposition, by giving them such food as we had, and also some tobacco, of which they are excessively fond. I presented to each man a tomahawk, (or mago, as they call it,) which they prize above all things. They are exceedingly fond of biscuit, bread, or flour, which they knead and bake in the ashes, in the same manner as they see our people do it ; but the article of food which appears most delicious to them, is the boiled meal of Indian corn ; and next to it the corn

roasted in the ashes, like chestnuts: of sugar too they are inordinately fond, as well as of every thing sweet. One of their greatest treats is to get an Indian bag that has had sugar in it: this they cut into pieces and boil in water. They drink this liquor till they sometimes become intoxicated, and till they are fairly blown out, like an ox in clover, and can take no more.

Having, before I went to Sydney, discovered those things which were most to their taste, I took care to be well provided with them on my return here. Before I left Port Stephens, I intimated to them that I should soon return in a "corbon" (large) ship, with a "murry" (great) plenty of white people, and murry tousand things for them to eat. Upon this they set up a great shout, and expressed the same boisterous pleasure that school-boys do when a holiday, or any very agreeable treat is promised by the master. They promised to get me "murry tousand bark." "Oh! plenty bark, massa." "Plenty black pellow, massa: get plenty bark." "Tree, pour, pive nangry" (three, four, five days) make plenty bark for white pellow, massa." "You come back toon?" "We look out for corbon ship on corbon water," (the sea.) "We tee, (see,) massa." "We look out." "We get it bark." After this they chattered among themselves, laughed incessantly, and appeared overjoyed at what was to come. I then gave them a sugar-bag with some sugar, and an iron pot to boil it in. They bore these off in triumph to their camp, a few rods only from my tent; and when their mess was prepared, they sent to inform me that they wished to have a corrobory (dance) if I would allow it. As soon as I signified to them that they might do what they pleased, they made

an immense fire of dried wood, and set their pot of sugar-bag by the side of it. I observed them all to retire to their camp for a short time; and when they returned, they had figured different parts of their bodies with pipe-clay, in a very curious and even handsome manner. They had chalked straight lines from the ankle up the outside of the thigh, which made them appear, by fire-light, as if they had hussar pantaloons on. Their faces had been rubbed with red earth, like ochre; and their breasts chalked with serpentine lines, interspersed with dots, &c. They were perfectly naked, as they always are; and in this state they began to corrobery, or dance.

A man with a woman or two act as musicians, by striking two sticks together, and singing or bawling a song, which I cannot well describe to you: it is chiefly in half tones, extending sometimes very high and loud, and then descending so low as almost to sink to nothing. The dance is exceedingly amusing, but the movement of the limbs is such as no European could perform: it is more like the limbs of a pasteboard harlequin, when set in motion by a string, than any thing else I can think of. They sometimes change places from apparently indiscriminate positions, and then fall off in pairs; and after this return, with increasing ardour, in a phalanx of four and five deep, keeping up the harlequin-like motion altogether in the best time possible, and making a noise with their lips like "proo, proo, proo;" which changes successively to grunting, like the kangaroo, of which it is an imitation, and not much unlike that of a pig. Their eyes were all turned towards me; and when I laughed and appeared much pleased, they quickened their motion in phalanx, and raised the grunting in proportion, till

they were tired; and in an instant they turned their backs and disunited, with a loud shout, which gradually turned into a hearty laugh. "Dat murry (very) goot, massa." "You like it?" says one fellow. "Yes," said I, "very much." "Dat belonging to kangaroo," says another. "Well, massa," said a third, "we drink little now, you know." "Black pellow murry dry." "Den more corrobbery, you know." "You like it, massa?" "You like him, black pellow?" "You gib (give) him corn meal; moak, (smoke, meaning tobacco;) tomahawk. Murry tousand tings, you know." "Dat (I) bring massa pish (fish) when uroka jump up," (the sun rises,) "and corbon oysters." "Dat set down black camp, you know." "Bale dat leabe (leave) Port Teebid." "Dat belonging to massa, now." "All black pellow belonging to massa now, you know."

After this, to me very interesting and amusing colloquy, they corrobberied again and again, till in pity to them, I was obliged to tell them to leave off and not tire themselves too much, and that I would join them again soon. At this time I had about thirty men, women, and children, about me. During the corrobbery, I observed the gins (women or wives) standing in a circle by themselves, practising a curious kind of motion with their legs. The fleshy parts of their legs are brought sharply into contact, and they contrive to produce by it a sound almost like a pair of clappers which are used to frighten birds from a garden, only not so loud. On enquiring why they did not corrobbery with the men, I could get no answer, only *that they never did*.

When the promised brig (corbon ship) arrived, which brought us here, after I had left them, they were the

first to give notice of her when she hove in sight. They told me that they should look out, and so they did; but on my landing I found my sable friends had multiplied greatly, and to no less a number than one hundred and fifty of both sexes, and of all ages and sizes. They painted themselves most gaily to receive us, and showed great joy when I arrived. Our people were struck with astonishment at their numbers and appearance, for in that part of the colony where they had been residing they had never seen one. A corrobory was repeated at night round a blazing fire. In these cases, their painted bodies, white teeth, shock heads of hair; their wild and savage appearance, with the reflection of the fire in a dark night, would have formed a terrific spectacle to any person coming suddenly and unexpectedly upon them. They are, however, one of the best-natured people in the world, and would never hurt a white man if treated with civility and kindness. I would trust myself any where with them; and with my own blacks by my side, as I call them, I should feel myself safe against any enemy I could meet with in the bush. They are excellent shots, and I have often lent them a musket to shoot kangaroos, when it has always been taken care of and safely returned.

When away from this settlement, they appear to have no fixed place of residence, although they have a district of country which they call theirs, and in some part of which they are always to be found. They have not, as far as I can learn, any king or chief. They have some customs and ceremonies common to all tribes, and they meet in large bodies to inflict punishment on members who offend against certain rules; but I cannot discover

the authority that calls them together to judge of the measure of punishment, or the regulator of the ceremonies, and I have met with no person in the colony who could inform me on these points. I never heard but of one punishment, which is, I believe, inflicted for all offences. It consists in the culprit standing, for a certain time, to defend himself against the spears which any of the assembled multitude think proper to hurl at him. He has a small target, called a *carrillè*, made of thick bark, hardened by the fire, and generally proof against a spear. It is in this form,



two feet and a half long, by fifteen inches wide; and the offender protects himself so dexterously by it, as seldom to receive any injury, although instances have occurred of persons being killed. Their limbs and muscles are so pliable, that they can cover themselves by this shield. One of my best blacks had stolen another man's gin, (a great crime in their eyes,) and he was ordered to stand the ordeal on the opposite shore. I took him over in my boat, in order to see the "pight," as they call it; and I thought I should have dived into the secret of their government, but I could learn little that was new from them. There were vast quantities of men assembled to see it: as the man aggrieved, however, did not appear to throw the first spear, no punishment took place, and my champion and I came back as we went.

I endeavoured to persuade him not to go; but he held it a point of honour to appear, and signified that he should be considered as a coward, and branded as such, if he did not present himself. His target was beautifully made, and ornamented with pipe-clay and red ochre. The ground was white, and quartered with red lines, with a red margin. He held it up several times, and flourished it in the boat, saying to me: "You no pear, (fear,) massa, black pellow no hit me. I no pear; I look out; I take care; I top pear, (I stop spear;) I tee him; I catch him, massa. Bael me (I don't) care." The word *bael* means no, not, or any negative: they frequently say, "Bael we like it;" "Bael dat good;" "Bael me go dere." But I said: "You should not have carried Mary away from her husband." "Bael dat, massa," he very sharply answered; "Mary come me. Dat husband murry bad man: he waddy (beat) Mary. Mary no like it, so it leabe it. Dat pellow no goot, massa."

When one tribe or district of natives either receives, or supposes it receives, some injury from another, a challenge is sent, but from what authority, or of what kind, no one appears to know. If I enquire, they either do not know, or they will not inform me. They meet on an appointed day: at first, a good deal of parley takes place, in tones of defiance: they menace each other with their spears, and by flourishing their short clubs, (waddys,) stamping with their feet; they then retire again, then come to close quarters, pushing each other about, tones of defiance becoming more violent, till at last they are worked up to a state of fury, like demons, calling or bawling out, "Wor, wor," (burring and dwelling upon the r,) and fall to with their waddys upon each other's

heads, which are voluntarily held forward to receive alternately blows that would fell an ox, till one or more falls, or is disabled, which occasions a terrible shout or yell in token of victory. After some hard fighting, they sometimes retire a little, flourish their clubs in the air, with loud menacing tones and violent gestures; they then fall to again till they are tired, when they quietly disperse with their heads broken and bleeding: they seldom kill each other. The spears are not always used upon such occasions, although they carry them to the fight, and manœuvre with them. Their skulls are generally found to be much thicker than those of Europeans; were this not the case, they would be crushed in by the first blow from such a weapon as their waddy is: it is formed like a large kitchen poker, and nearly as heavy, only much shorter in the handle. The iron-bark wood, of which it is made, is very hard, and nearly as heavy as iron. When a poor gin offends her sable lord, he taps her over the head with this weapon in no very gentle manner. On our first coming here, several instances occurred in our sight of the use of this waddy upon their wives. I trust I have put a stop to it; for finding that I have a complete ascendancy over them, they have been given to understand that this treatment of their gins is disagreeable to white men, and will not be permitted, since which I have not heard of an instance of such abuse. One blow with this weapon, as they give it, would lay an European low, never to rise again. When the woman sees the blow coming, she sometimes holds her head quietly to receive it, much like Punch and his wife in the puppet-shows; but she screams violently, and cries much, after it has been inflicted. I have seen but few gins

here whose heads do not bear the marks of the most dreadful violence of this kind. The skull is frequently indented in several places. These poor creatures are made to do all the drudgery, as is always the case amongst a rude and savage people. They carry the wood for fires, make the nets for fishing, and carry every thing else that they move about with, except their instruments of war. They make string out of bark with astonishing facility, and as good as you can get in England, by twisting and rolling it in a curious manner with the palm of the hand on the thigh. With this they make nets larger than a cabbage-net, of curious workmanship. The meshes are almost as small as for a purse, but there is not, I believe, a knot in them any where, except at the beginning and finishing. These nets are slung by a string round their forehead, and hang down their backs, and are used like a work-bag or reticule. They contain all the articles they carry about with them, such as fishing-hooks made from oyster or pearl shells, broken shells, or pieces of glass, when they can get them, to scrape the spears to a thin and sharp point, with prepared bark for string, gum for gluing different parts of their war and fishing spears, and sometimes oysters and fish when they move from the shore to the interior. With the net thus filled, and frequently a child astride on the shoulders, they move off with the men, generally in parties, not because they are better in any other place, but from the love of change, I believe. Their food consists of fish when near the coasts, but when in the woods, of opossums, bandicoots, and almost any animal they can catch, and also a kind of grub which they find in decayed wood; sometimes they spear a kangaroo.

They roast all the fish and animals on the ashes, skin and all, just as they catch them. When it is pretty well done, they divide it amongst themselves by tearing it with their teeth and fingers; and, excepting the bones, they devour every part, including the entrails.

They are remarkably fond of their children, and when the parents die, the children are adopted by the unmarried men and women, and taken the greatest care of. They are exceedingly kind and generous towards each other: if I give tobacco or any thing else to any man, it is divided with the first he meets without being asked for it. They go up the largest and tallest trees with great facility, by means of notches made with their tomahawks, to cut opossums out of them, or to procure wild honey, which is deposited there by a small bee, not larger than a common fly.

Their quickness is astonishing, and they throw the spear at the distance of forty yards with the greatest precision and force. I have frequently seen them kill birds, either by throwing stones from the hand, or by spears. They sleep before their fires frequently in a circle, with their heads upon each other's hips, without any covering in summer; but in winter, or rainy weather, they cut large sheets of bark, which they either sleep under, or set up in the shape of a half cone, supported by sticks at different angles. This is all they require, and so long as they are constantly wandering, it is the best and most simple plan they could pursue in such a climate as this. There is no chance of giving them, or at any rate, those of the present generation, settled habits; and unless they could be independent of the abuses, and free from the acquired vices of white men, they are better off and hap-

pier as they are. They are a cheerful, merry, and good-natured people, and very honest into the bargain. They will take letters or parcels from hence to Newcastle, (about forty miles,) for Sydney. They would as soon part with their lives, as a letter or parcel with which they are entrusted, upon the safe delivery of which you may therefore certainly calculate; but as they are great gossips, they will occasionally stop with their neighbours if they fall in with them, unless they are tied to return by an appointed time.

I will here tell you a story relating to myself and the natives, although I must confess there is rather more in it of myself than of them.

When I left this place for Sydney five months ago, I went in a large open boat belonging to government to Newcastle: we were wind-bound as soon as we got out of the harbour, and obliged to land in a small bay, and stay there all night. Before we approached, a body of natives appeared, and held up a quantity of fish as an invitation to join them. As soon as they saw our intention, they came into the water, and assisted to draw the boat ashore. My tobacco passed current, and we were friends in an instant: they took my portmanteau on their heads, and in a few minutes I was seated on my luggage amidst twenty or thirty of them, at a little distance from the place where they were roasting their fish. Being always well informed of all passing events in the bush, they knew who I was.

Questions were then put to me: "You come Port Teebens, massa?" "You make corbon house there?" "You gib black pellow ommina, (corn meal,) bacca, (tobacco,) bisket, and murry tousand tings?" I answer-

ed, "Yes." They raised a shout of pleasure, and said: "Dat go tit (sit) down with you ; dat get it plenty bark; murry tousand bark, massa." I readily agreed to this, for bark was what I wanted, to build huts with, and they knew it. "You patter (eat) pish, massa?" said one. "Yes," said I, "and you must roast me one as you patter it." He instantly took a fine mullet from a lot that was on the ground near him, and carried it towards the fire. Recollecting myself a little, I requested my servant William to follow him, and to see that the inside was taken out. He, however, found the black man cleaning it at the sea, and it was then brought to the fire. After waiting a long time for my fish, I got rather impatient, and sent William to see for it. He returned laughing, and said I must still wait, for it was *roasting* before the fire on two forked sticks; while another, which William had privately ordered for himself, was on the ashes. "What is that for?" said William. "Dat belonging corbon massa," pointing to the one roasting; "Dat belonging a you," pointing to the other on the ashes. The fish was brought when cooked, and I made a hearty meal of it, while sitting surrounded by the whole tribe, one of whom, unasked, occasionally brushed the musquitoes from my coat. I was obliged to stay all night, and had no blanket to cover me; but in this fine climate, and particularly in the summer, when no rain falls, this was no hardship. The poor natives, assisted by William, soon made me one of their gunyers, (bark huts,) and I slept as well in it as if I had been in a palace; perhaps much better.

In the morning the wind was still foul, but I was determined to get to Newcastle that day at all events, to save the Sydney Packet, as I had business of importance on

hand. I started early in the morning to go by land, as I supposed twenty-five miles, chiefly by the beach. My companions were a corporal and four privates of the 57th regiment; a runaway convict from Port Macquarie, (who had come two hundred miles across the country by a circuitous route, and given himself up, stripped, half starved, and speared by the natives afar off;) two blacks, who carried my portmanteau and carpet-bag on their heads; and my servant William. After travelling about ten miles we stopped to breakfast, and to my great surprise, I found my companions had no provisions; and I had only half a tin of preserved meat, a small quantity of bread, and about half a pint of rum. I gave all a share at breakfast, and we set off, hoping to be at Newcastle to dinner; but in this we were disappointed, for instead of twenty-five miles it turned out to be nearer forty-five, and over a sandy beach, in which we sunk, at every step, above the soles of our shoes. At the end of twenty-five miles, I divided the remainder of my provisions with my fellow-travellers; so that we were all upon an equal footing, as to food, during the rest of the journey. We had still fifteen or twenty miles to travel; and I had sprained one of the back sinews of my left leg, which occasioned me much pain and inconvenience. We walked till it was dark, and had many miles to go after that. At length the soldiers became tired, and said they could go no further; and my servant William joined with them in urging the necessity of stopping all night on the shore. At this time rain was coming on: it was very dark, and the wind blew hard. The fatigue and pain I felt from my lameness was so great that I longed to sit down; but still I determined to proceed.

The country near the beach was a sand-bank for many miles. We found neither tree nor bush to shelter a traveller ; we had no covering to protect us from the rain and wind ; and I had been wet to the knees for hours, by walking too near the surf in order to avoid the soft sand, which was dreadfully fatiguing. Added to all this, we had no provisions. I did not wish to control any one in such a case ; but to the solicitations for stopping I answered, that if my limbs would support my body, they should carry me to Newcastle that evening, provided my two blacks would accompany me to show the road. My white friends said no more, except one soldier, who cursed and swore for some miles, because the corporal would follow me.

At length we arrived at the Coal River, opposite the town, where we were obliged to wait a quarter of an hour till the pilot's boat came across the river for us. We fired three shots before we could bring the boat, and in the mean while rested ourselves on a log of wood. Never was rest so sweet, so welcome to me, as then ! But when I endeavoured to move to the boat, my limbs refused their office. My faithful blacks and William assisted me to it, and also from it to the shore, from which I hobbled, by their assistance, to the inn. It rained tremendously during the whole night, and the greater part of the next day ; so that, had I yielded to the wishes of others, foolish at that time as I thought they were, I should probably, in my situation, have lost my life. As it was, I did not, for more than a month, fully regain my usual health and strength, or recover from my lameness. This day's journey had lasted from half-past six in the morning till eight at night, with scarcely any rest during those hours.

The black men behaved admirably : they were cheerful all the way, with their burdens on their heads, although they were also very tired. Just before arriving at a pool of water, which they only could find in this sandy desert, I observed them always to quicken their pace, and leave us all behind. They would call out, " Corbon water ; budgeree (good) water here, massa ;" and as soon as they reached it, their heads were instantly in the pool, drinking like fish. When they had taken their draught, they left us ; and before we had finished ours, they were regularly sound asleep on the ground. I shook and awoke them, and off they went again with us, as pleasantly as before. I regaled them at Newcastle with every thing they wished for, and they took a letter safely back to Port Stephens for me.*

On my return a month afterwards, the same natives met me here, and we shook hands most cordially and talked of our toils and travels. They observed, "it was much too far without *nangry*, (sleep, rest, or night.)

* On ordering them a loaf of bread each, the wife of the innkeeper remarked that she did not keep bread for such people. I repeated my request, observing that if she was paid for the bread, it could signify little to her who consumed it. It was then supplied ; and, in the morning, an officer under government, Mr. Busby, and myself, were furnished by this civilized white woman with bread of such a quality for breakfast as we could not eat. On my complaining, I was cavalierly informed that I had ordered all her best bread for the blacks last night. This I afterwards discovered to be untrue. I wonder how many meals of fish this white lady had been supplied with by the good-natured blacks, whom she thus affected to despise. Another individual, a settler, once observed to my nephew, Mr. J. G. Dawson, that he was greatly annoyed by the blacks ; and he had once entertained an idea of laying poison for them, the same as for rats. This feeling, with regard to the natives, was not, I believe, confined to him, as the acts of some of the settlers will testify.

“Bael dat budgere, massa.” “Bael dat do white pellow good.” “Too much moroo (walking) no good.” “Dat make him (you) boy, (die,) massa. Black pellow like it nangry on beach always, when moroo coal ribber.” These two men are often here, and we always acknowledge each other as fellow-travellers, with much pleasantry on both sides.

In speaking of their *customs*, I ought to have said, that when any of their relations die, they show respect for their memories by plastering their heads and faces all over with pipe-clay, which remains till it falls off of itself. The gins also burn the front of the thigh severely, and bind the wound up with thin strips of bark. This is putting themselves in mourning. We put on black; they put on white: so that it is black and white in both cases. I have frequently seen this; and on inquiring who is dead, I am always answered, in a mournful tone of voice, “Dat pather (father) belonging me.” “Dat piccaninny (child) belonging to parden or mammee.” When they are sick, and you ask what is the matter with them, they answer, “Oh! dat dable, dable;” which means that the devil or some evil spirit has visited them.

I cannot learn, precisely, whether they worship any God or not; but they are firm in their belief that their dead friends go to another country; and that they are turned into white men, and return here again. This is, as near as can be, the doctrine of transmigration. The idea must either be original with them, or else arises from some former vague notion concerning a resurrection, which has grown into its present shape since the Europeans came amongst them. The present race can give no further account of its origin than I can.

They have no idea of numbers beyond five, which are reckoned by the fingers. When they wish to express a number, they hold up so many fingers : beyond five they say, "murry tousand," (many thousands.)

They are excessively fond of any part of the dress of white people. Sometimes I see them with an old hat on : sometimes with a pair of old shoes, or only one : frequently with an old jacket and hat, without trowsers : or, in short, with any garment, or piece of a garment, that they can get. You may imagine how much laughter is excited amongst us, at times, by these grotesque-looking figures.

One of the highest honours that can be conferred on them is to make them constables, and to give them a staff. That the honour may not be too cheap, I have made only two. They never appear but with their staves of office under their arms, and it is beyond measure ridiculous to observe the consequence they assume amongst their own people.

Hear a conversation which one of my sable policemen, alias "*black guard*," held with me some time since. "Massa, pose black pellow crammer (steal,) den I ketch it you know. Pose dat go in bush ; I look out ; I find it ; I bring it back ; I murry cooler (angry) ; I gib it waddy, (club,) and put it in watch-house you know ; I make it know what he 'bout ; dat no crammer 'gain massa ; bael I like anoder black pellow. I tit down (stay) here always ; dis my place ; you my massa, you know ; I make black pellow work ; I make it work ; he no gammon me, massa."

Soon after this harangue the doctor was going from our camp to the village which is called by its native name, Carrabeau. It was nearly dark, and Mr. Heppie, the black constable, (for that is his name,) called out in a

thundering voice, "who come dare?" "A friend," was the answer. "O, murry goot," says Mr. Heppie. "Pose dat black pellow, I taid, dable what he do dare? Why for he leabe black camp when dark? tit (sit) down. Den I put it in watch-house you know, and take it massa when urokah (sun) jump up." "That is very right, Heppie," was the answer, with a hearty laugh at the end of it.

Some weeks ago I went about fifty miles in my boat up a river discharging itself into this harbour, called the Myall, for the purpose of taking the examination of a witness against four men, who on the 8th of March had wantonly killed a native black boy on the banks of the river, and also with a view to ascertain the nature of the country about the river.

The men had been sent there by a person cutting cedar, under a government license, as I have before described. The overseer, Mr. Pennington, had sworn to certain facts before me, upon which I issued a warrant against the men. Two were apprehended and committed to jail by me, and the attorney-general committed the others at Sydney.

Having arranged to proceed on my journey, I was rowed up the river by five natives, accompanied by the overseer above named, by Mr. H. T. Ebsworth, of this establishment, and a convict servant. My boat's crew knew well upon what errand I was going, for during the examination of the prisoners they and many other natives loitered about the tent, seemingly with much satisfaction at seeing the prisoners in charge of the soldiers and constables, and they put many pertinent questions to me on the subject as soon as they were sent off.

We started from this place about 4 P. M. and we

rowed about ten miles, when I proposed to stop and sleep on the banks of the river. When we were looking out for a good spot, the blacks observed a light at some distance on the opposite shore. "Black pellow pire," said one of the natives. "Let us go there," said I. "Bael I go there, massa," he answered. "Very well," said I, "take me where you please then. But why will you not go to your countrymen there?" "Dey no good, massa; bael we go," was the reply. Soon after this we heard a loud talking and laughing, and as we approached nearer, my men discovered, by the tones of the distant voices, that they were friends. "Dat good, massa," they called out: "we go dare. We get it fire-stick (fire-brand) to make fire when we nangry," (sleep.)

They accordingly rowed directly to the spot; and as we approached the sandy bank, we saw a groupe of men, women, and children squatted before a blazing fire, which had a very curious effect by night.

As soon as they heard the boat they called to us, and recognizing the voices of our boat's crew, the men met us instantly in the water, up to their knees, to draw the boat ashore. I did not get out of the boat; but as soon as they saw me they gave me a hearty greeting. Their having seen me at Port Stephens, and tasted my Indian corn-meal and tobacco, was sufficient passport. I greeted them in return, and gave them tobacco, which seemed, as it always does, to possess an almost supernatural charm with them. They promised to visit my camp in the morning, on the opposite banks, about half a mile from them, (where our crew proposed to nangry,) and to catch us some fish for breakfast. Before I was out of my tent in the morning, I heard their voices; true to their promise,

they had brought some fish, and in return I gave them corn-meal for breakfast. They sat, or rather squatted before my fire, and appeared delighted beyond measure at the attention I paid them.

While breakfast was preparing, I played several tunes on an octave flute, to which they beat time with their heads and bodies, and were much amused and delighted with it.

After breakfast I exhibited their faces to them in their turns, in a looking glass. It is impossible to describe the effect of this upon them. They were at first astonished, and suddenly drew back their heads from the glass; they then looked again, till they were satisfied it was themselves, upon which they gave loud screams of laughter, passing it from one to the other; and they appeared quite as much amused at the surprise and grimaces of each other, as we were. Upon a former occasion, on showing an old woman her image in the glass, she burst into tears; but I could not discover the source of a feeling so different from all others I had seen.

I have forgotten to mention, that on landing at our place of encampment, after calling on the natives on the opposite shore the preceding evening, I discovered that a boy about twelve years old had got unperceived into my boat, and had crossed with us. As soon as we landed, this boy got some bark from a tree called the tea-tree, which makes excellent torches, quite equal to those used by the link-boys about the theatres in London, and with this he conducted me to a place where I wished to fix my tent. Seeing some wood lying in my path, he gently took hold of my arm: "Massa," said he, "waddy (wood) you tee, (see)." He still kept hold of my arm

with one hand while he carried the torch with the other, calling out every now and then: "Take care, massa, bael you pall down;" and conducted me with as much attention and politeness as any civilized boy in Europe, of the same or maturer age, could have done. How much superior, I thought, was this unsophisticated child of nature, to the little worthless vagabonds that infest the streets of that great emporium of the world called London!

We started from our resting-place the following morning, and were rowed by our native crew about thirty miles the same day, and slept again on the banks of the river. The country about us was flat and uninteresting. Nothing occurred during this day worth mentioning, except the continued good-humour and jollity of our boat's crew, who rowed with as much skill as the most experienced seamen could have done. It is extraordinary that it should be so; but take any half dozen men from any of the tribes about here, and they will manage the oar with the expertness of experienced boatmen.

They have canoes made of bark, with which they go about this harbour, and cross the rivers and creeks; but they manage these with a paddle shaped thus,



They place themselves on their knees on a kind of bark cushion, at the bottom of the canoe, and steer and propel their little bark, first pulling on one side, then on the other, with great dexterity and rapidity.

But to return to my expedition up and from the Myall. We arrived on the 3rd of May at the hut we had come in

search of. I found there three white men, one of whom was lying before the fire, wrapped up in a blanket. He had been hewn almost to pieces by an axe, and was almost exhausted from fear and loss of blood.

He stated to me, that he had been attacked by a native black, in revenge for the murder of the boy, whose fate I had come to ascertain; and lamented that he should have been the sufferer for the crimes of others. I also learned, that the people who had been cutting cedar there for some years previously, had slaughtered the natives indiscriminately, and left their carcasses to be devoured, as they actually were, by their dogs! Who could then wonder at the revenge which the natives seek? I believe they have been quietly disposed every where, when well treated; and I know they are proud beyond measure of the friendly notice of white people, and consider them as superior beings.

I did all I could for the wounded man, by leaving him some linen to bind his wounds, and some medicine which I always carried with me. I thought he would not die,* and on the following day I left him with his companions. The overseer promised to remove him as soon as he could bear it: in the mean time, we divided our boat's crew, as I wished to proceed home by land and on foot. Mr. Ebsworth and two blacks, with the convict servant, accompanied me, and the other three blacks took the boat back, with Mr. Pennington, the overseer of the cedar-cutters. I ought to have mentioned, that on our way up the river, we took in the last day a strange native,

* He died soon afterwards, in the boat which I sent up for the purpose of removing him to our settlement for the benefit of medical aid.

who had been attracted by the report of our guns at the ducks, which are every where numerous on the rivers; and as he appeared very friendly, I enticed him to proceed overland with our party. The two black men from the boat each carried our blankets and other articles; and to lighten their load, we placed the provisions and the tomahawk on the head of the strange black, who although civil was evidently not pleased with his office.

When I started from home I had no idea of returning by land; but as the weather was fine, when up the river, I resolved to do so, in order to examine the country. My sable friends did not know the way; but I trusted to their sagacity to lead us home in two days, the distance being about thirty-five miles. We had sent home our tent by the boat, and trusted to our tomahawks to cut as much bark as would cover us on the ground during the night, and, assisted by the heat of a good fire, protect us from the cold.

Having proceeded about six miles, we missed, on a sudden, our sumpter black. Our sable guides "cooed" and "cooed" again, in their usual tone of calling to each other at a distance, but no answer was returned: he was gone, and our provisions with him. I looked at my friend and companion Ebsworth, and he at me, with an air of great concern for a moment; and although it was really no joke, yet the trick played by the fellow was so neatly done, and our situation so truly ridiculous, that we simultaneously burst into a loud laugh at each other. When this was over, we dispatched our two faithful guides and the white servant, after the runaway; but I could not allow them to leave us in the bush sufficiently long to track and overtake him, which they would no

doubt have done before night came on, had they been allowed.

When they returned we began to examine the various articles in the charge of our attendants, with a view of seeing whether we could proceed on our journey or not. The convict had put two biscuits in his pocket, and had a small bread cake, which he had that morning baked in the ashes, and fortunately placed in a saucepan, which it fell to his share to carry. On making further search we found a very small quantity of pork, a cold tongue, and a little Hollands accidentally packed up with our blankets. We therefore proceeded on, cautiously dividing our pittance of bread at our meals. Our blacks frequently expressed great indignation at the "crammering" (thieving) rascal, and proposed as a punishment, to steal his "gin" (wife) and bring him to be flogged "anoder time."

On arriving at the place where we stopped to sleep, our black friends lamented the loss of their corn-meal, flour, tea, sugar, &c. They could eat neither pork nor tongue; and our bread, of which they were very fond, was in quantity too scanty to afford much to any one's share. While they were talking of hunger, a crow perched on a tree near to us: they eyed it with great eagerness to patter (eat); it was immediately shot for them, and in less than five minutes it was on the coals. When it was about half cooked they devoured it, entrails and all, and soon afterwards laid themselves down to sleep before the fire.

But how shall we sleep? thought Ebsworth and I. Our tomahawk being gone, (as well as our tea, sugar, spoons, plates, &c.) we could cut no bark to shield us from the chill at night, which at this season was not to be laughed at.

We made, however, two tremendous fires, and placed between them some sticks, supporting each other so as to form a hood, something like the hood of a single horse-chaise, after the manner of the blacks, when they attempt to make any thing like a hut, which they call a *gunyer*. We tore, with our hands, some bark from the nearest trees, with which, and with grass and other materials, we contrived a place, under which we crept, and wrapped ourselves up in our blankets during the night.

On the following morning we started again, and proceeded over a very hilly and broken tract of country, lamenting very often the absence of our bread and tea. We travelled till late in the afternoon up and down ravines, then over high rocky ranges; sometimes descending into plains or vales of long grass up to the knees, crossing wide creeks every now and then by means of single trees, which had accidentally fallen headlong across, and which reminded us, in the difficulty of balancing the body over them, of tight-rope dancing at a village fair. I must confess that this species of balancing was not much to my taste, and gave me more annoyance than any thing during this curious expedition: the natives walked them like cats or monkeys, and frequently had a hand to spare for me. We were at length nearly worn out before our guides could recognize in the distance their dear native hills at Port Stephens. When they descried them, they capered and sang, and their joy was excessive, calling out, "Toon tee all black pellow's 'gain, massa: come on, massa. Bael me tired now: murry little way now, massa. Soon patter dinner now; corn-meal, bacca (tobacco) toon come 'gain." They then took up their loads and went briskly off, singing, "Peggy wad a tarban gale, .

tarried a milken pail." ("Peggy was a charming girl, and carried a milking pail.") A line which they often sing in chorus before my fire. They soon left us poor whites to lag behind, being so greatly fatigued by our previous travelling; but they stopped every now and then till we joined them, and would, I really believe, have done any thing, however inconvenient to themselves, to have served us more than they did.

On reaching a place where I had established some sawyers, about four miles from the harbour, we learned there that two of the wives of our imported servants had eloped during our absence with two emancipists; that their husbands, accompanied by a constable, had searched in vain for them; that in returning home with some natives, who had also assisted in the search, the constable, named Byron, had either accidentally, or by design, shot a black man named Tony, who was the principal of all the black tribes about this port, and whom I had called, on my first coming here, "the king," giving him a brass breast-plate, in token of my desire that he should hold the highest rank in the estimation of his countrymen.

The sawyers appeared dreadfully alarmed, and said they were sure vengeance would be taken, as had always been the case every where; that, as they were at the outposts, they should be the first to be speared, and that they must be furnished immediately with fire-arms, to protect themselves. I did not agree to this, as I believed that my influence over the natives, and the power I had to send off the aggressor, would in the end satisfy them, and preserve the peace which had hitherto so happily been maintained between us.

Our two natives stood mute on hearing the news, their

features betraying no unusual concern; and they said not a word, till we took our departure for a station where I had established a farm, and where, as it was nearer than Port Stephens, I resolved to stop and dine, and to send for horses to take us home afterwards, a distance of about three miles.

After leaving the sawyers, I began by saying that I was sorry poor Tony had been killed, that I liked him, and all black fellows much; that I had sent two white fellows off to be hanged for killing little Tommy up the Myall; and that I would have Byron (the constable) hanged too. "What dat kill it for, massa?" was the answer of one of the blacks. "Bael black pellow hurt dat; dat pellow no good; dat go Sydney long udder white pellow; you put irons on hands, massa, same as udder pellow, den send away, you know, dat no come back again." Then he turned to his companion and said: "Massa look it out, you know; he like all black pellow murry, murry, (very much, very much.) Dat no get away; bael dat come here, again. Massa no let it hurt black pellow gain, you know."

We arrived at the farm, but the cheerfulness of our guides had fled: they sat down by the fire in the hut, sad and pensive, expressed no anxiety to eat, although they had longed for their dinner before—spoke to no one unless when spoken to. I anxiously watched their actions and appearance, although I had no apprehension of danger from them or any others. In a short time, two others, whom I had made constables, came in, looking very sorrowful: they had come up by water with a punt-load of provisions for the farm, unaccompanied by any white man, as they had frequently done before, having

never betrayed their trust, or touched an atom of the provisions.

I had styled one of them the *captain* of the corbon (great) boat, in contradistinction to other boats thus employed, and navigated by the natives. They had both plaid trowsers and jackets on, which they had received as a reward for former and continued services. "Ah! Crosely," said I to the captain, "I murry sorry for poor Tony." "Yeas, yeas, massa, like it dat. He murry pine pellow. Dat make all black pellow get plenty bark. Black pellow all cry, O, much cry, massa! Glad you come back: we look out for you long time. Byron no good, massa. Dat go off Sydney, now massa come home. Dat no hurt black pellow gain, massa. All black pellow 'long (belong) massa. Massa like black pellow; black pellow like massa; yeas, yeas." He then shook his head sorrowfully, and walked towards his two companions, who stood listening to our conversation.

A good deal of talk then ensued between the four natives, explaining, as I have no doubt, the whole affair. No signs of anger appeared in any one of them: they seemed to trust to the punishment which they had been told by others, in my absence, I should inflict on the aggressor. Their confidence, too, in the promises I had myself made to them, (having never, knowingly, broken my faith with them on any occasion,) appeared to satisfy them, and to moderate those feelings of revenge which might otherwise have been indulged on this tragical occasion.

Having thus soothed and condoled with them, I returned home, in the dark, to the settlement, attended by these four trusty and faithful natives.

On my arrival, I learned all the particulars of the transaction, and issued a warrant for the constable to be brought up at a certain hour the next day, handcuffed, and in the custody of two armed soldiers, wishing to make as much display as possible on the occasion, to prove to the natives that I wished and intended to protect them.

I understand that as soon as the death of the native was known, the whole multitude of blacks went to the spot. They tied a handkerchief over the wounds of the deceased's head, which had been shattered to pieces, and carried him off, supported on the shoulders of two natives, and followed by a long train of mourners, crying and howling most piteously. They were moving on in this way, in the most regular and decent order possible, when the surgeon, and my nephew, Mr. J. G. Dawson, approached them, in order to examine the body, in the absence of any coroner.

This would not have been permitted to any other white people, as they never allow the bodies of the deceased to be seen, if they can avoid it. Respect for us, however, induced them to put down the body after a little explanation; but a good deal of uneasiness seemed to be excited during the examination, which called forth a few wild and plaintive expressions from the captain before named, of "Bael dat, massa, bael dat: black fellow no like it." As soon as the gentlemen had made a satisfactory examination, they left them as quickly as they could, wishing to avoid, as much as possible, offending their prejudices, upon such a melancholy and critical occasion.

The mourners, however, and all the fraternity of blacks,

had left the settlement before I returned, except eight, who had always been about my tent, and employed in performing all the work I had occasion for in the boat and punt, assisting the cook making fires, and acting as messengers from one part of the settlement to the other; in short, doing any thing I required of them. On expressing my surprise to them that their friends had all left their camps, they answered: "Bael dat, massa; dey come back again by and by. Dey go udder side harbour, to get pipe-clay. Dey cry murry long time, put on pipe-clay, den come back;" and so they did, as will be seen hereafter.

During their absence, our people expressed themselves sorry that the blacks had gone away, as they could get no water carried for them from the spring, or obtain any fish without them. The procuring of bark, too, for repairing old and erecting new huts, was at a stand. In short, the value of these poor, inoffensive people, was never so highly estimated and felt as when they were gone; and their return was consequently hailed as a benefit restored to the settlement at large. One native was absent on this occasion from his office of *hut-keeper*, to one of the emancipists: he had filled this situation with the greatest fidelity towards his employers, in preventing the convicts, who consider themselves so vastly superior to the natives, from robbing their neighbours, a practice of almost daily occurrence at their stations.

What became of the body of the deceased no white person knew, for they carefully concealed the place of interment. The oldest man of his tribe made his appearance, however, after a week's absence. I welcomed him on his return, and asked him why he staid so

long away. He made no answer; but one of my native domestics whispered me, "Dat make it house for black pellow dat boy, (die,)" meaning, that he had been preparing and earthing up the grave of the deceased Tony, whose name, since his death, has never been pronounced by any of them. They never mention the name of their deceased friends, and when alluded to, it is always in a tone indicative of sorrow. They make the graves, when they can, in a soft, sandy soil, where they dig with their hands to a considerable depth, always selecting the nearest possible spot to the birth-place of their departed friend. If the deceased should have sons, the eldest changes his name according to a certain established rule, which I am not sufficiently versed in their language to understand. I hope, when I have more leisure to learn the language, I shall know more of their institutions and rules of government, which appear to be very curious and interesting.

I must now revert to the examination of the constable who had shot Tony. He was brought to me by another constable, escorted by two soldiers, (a corporal's guard of nine men is established here for the protection of the settlement.) The natives, those I consider as peculiarly belonging to me, were grouped together before a fire near to my tent, where they had fixed themselves to be spectators of the scene. They passed the offender several times, and eyed him, as I thought, with a mixture of triumph and pity. I was obliged to commit him upon the evidence of his white companion, to appease the natives, if for no other reason; but I think, if a coroner's inquest could have been held, it would have been considered as accidental: but whether he had really shot the

man from deliberate malice, for which I could discover no cause, or in a fit of insanity, it is hard to tell. The latter, from the incoherency of his manner, appeared to me to have been the case. He was what is termed "a ticket of leave man," and having, in his office of constable at Sydney, shot a white man a few months before, for which he had been tried for murder and acquitted, he was recommended here, as a member of the committee informed me, by the governor's private secretary, in order to keep him out of the way of revenge from an incensed party in the neighbourhood of Sydney.

The moment he was gone the natives appeared more cheerful; they came about me like children, and gave me to understand that they knew how much I liked all black fellows.

I must here mention that the storekeeper Cowell told me that the evening after poor Tony was buried, Crosely (the black captain of the punt) and his companion, another black constable called Myall Tom, passed by the store very rapidly towards Byron's hut, their bodies and faces painted or coloured red, their frizzed hair hanging about their shoulders in an unusual manner, and armed with their war spears and clubs. Cowell went after them and brought them back, but not till they had searched the hut. Fortunately, Byron had a very short time before gone out on duty to muster the prisoners, or his life would without doubt have paid the forfeit of his conduct on the previous day. Cowell reasoned with them upon what they were about to do, and invited them to take corn-meal, tobacco, and tea, all of which they refused, saying, "Bael, we want patter." They gnashed their teeth, their eyes struck fire as it were, and their appear-

ance, as he described it, was wild and savage in the extreme. They paced backwards and forwards for some time before Cowell's door, using violent language and gestures. At length however they yielded to reason, and upon a full understanding that Byron would be sent off to jail when I came home, they became more calm, accepted of some flour to make a cake, which they baked in the ashes, settling quietly down for the evening. Early in the morning Cowell very prudently got them off in the punt to the farm, where they met me on my return from the Myall, as I have before related.

After this recital of facts, I think no person will doubt that these people possess reasoning faculties, and are sensible to kind or ill treatment from civilized men. Had they been the lowest and most degraded of human beings, as they have been erroneously described, they would not have acted thus. They were naturally indignant on hearing of the death of one of their most valued friends and companions by the hand of a white man, without any apparent provocation ; and if they had inflicted summary justice upon him, it would have been far from surprising. On the other hand, their conduct on the occasion was not the effect of stupidity or want of proper feeling towards a member of their society ; had it been so, they would have acted very differently.

After a week's absence from this settlement they returned in their canoes to us, a few at a time, from the opposite side of the harbour. The women came plastered over the head, face and breasts with pipe-clay, and those who were nearly related to the deceased, added to it a be-plastering over the body as far as the hip-bones. Their appearance was frightful, and represented the extreme of

wretchedness and despair. When any of the men met me, particularly the old ones, they held up their heads in token of grief, and appeared to express an affection towards me. I condoled with them, and we parted mutually satisfied, as I always thought, with each other.

I usually on these occasions inquired after the deceased's wife and son, a boy about a year and a half old. The answer uniformly was, that she was gone to the bungwall-ground to patter (eat) bungwall and to mourn; that she would return one day, but not yet. It is not unusual for them soon to return to the place where any near and dear connexion has died. Bungwall is fern-root, which they roast in the ashes, and afterwards pound into a paste between two stones: they are fond of it, and it appears to be nutritious.

On inquiring for the *mother* of the deceased, whom I had so often seen here with a younger son called George, about six years old, they told me she would soon be here, and would come and see me. I desired to be informed when the wife and brother should come, as I wished much to see them. A few days ago I saw a miserable looking object coming up the hill towards my tent, pipe-clayed all over, resting at intervals and leaning against the trees, as if too weak to come on. While I was surveying this object at a distance, little George came running towards me, exclaiming with all the eagerness and gaiety of a boy, "Mammee come, massa—dere mammee—look, massa, you tee." "Yes, George," said I, "I do see," and I immediately went to her; as soon as she saw me she held up her hands, with her body half bent forward, and wept till the tears overflowed her whitened cheeks in streams of unaffected grief. Before the catastrophe she was a re-

markably fine woman, being tall and athletic beyond any other on the settlement; *now*, she was a truly wretched and forlorn spectacle, apparently wasted down by watching and sorrow. I led her to the fire, and wrapped her up in warm blanket, which I gave her as her own, invited her to stay as long as she wished, to eat their favourite corn-meal, and presented her with a pipe and plenty of tobacco. She left me in tears, to join a group of women around a fire a short distance off; I watched her unperceived, and saw her sitting leaning with her cheek upon her hand, apparently in silent sorrow.

I have seen this poor creature often since our first meeting, at their different camps near us, and she has still the same wretched appearance; but she has never troubled me again for food or any thing else, although she cries and sobs when she sees me. I have been very minute in my description of every thing relative to the natives; because in speaking of them, I wish to describe them exactly as they have appeared to me, and to redeem them from the character which many of my countrymen have given them of stupidity, and want of the common feelings belonging to the human species. I will now relate another anecdote, descriptive of their fidelity and honesty, when entrusted with any thing they are willing to undertake.

After the bustle relating to the death of Tony had subsided, a young man, one of my boat's crew, called Wickie, proposed to me to go in search of the fellow who had run away with our provisions. He said he would undertake to find the spoons and pewter plates, &c. if I would lend him a musket and ammunition. I instantly agreed to this; and he started, in company with another native

who knew the country well and the quarter in which the runaway generally lived. At the end of four days they returned, when Wickie came straight to my tent with the articles on his head, at the moment we were all at dinner. "Here plate, massa; poon and all. Patter (food) gone, you know. Bael I get dat, you know." "But where is the thief, Wickie?" said I. "I want to flog him. I punish white pellow when he hurts black pellow; and I must punish black pellow when he hurts or steals from white pellow, you know." "Bael dat see me, massa. Dat murry jarrah (afraid,) you know. I got it musket, den run away all about; and I make it leabe plate behind, you know. Dat no come near me, massa. I look out. I find it one day, you know. I catch it." I suspect, however, that my friend could have brought the thief with him also, if he had willed it; but this was too much to demand or expect from him; and no doubt it would have been inconsistent with their laws and policy, except they had been at enmity with his tribe. I always endeavour to give them just notions of right and wrong; but it would be unwise to appear offended if they do not, on every occasion, adopt our notions; and it would be marvellous, indeed, if they were to do so. One ought never to forget that they are the untutored children of nature: wild from habit, and accustomed only to a certain train of ideas common to them all. I never forget that they have not been brought up to work; that they will not labour long at a time; and that if too much is expected and exacted, their friendship will soon cease for us. Like children, they must be treated with firmness and kindness, and suffered to have a holiday in the woods, to indulge in their old habits, whenever they ask for it. They never stay

long; but knowing that they can go when they please, they are contented, and are always willing to make themselves useful.

The poor widow and the son of the deceased Tony have not yet made their appearance, and it may be some time before they do. It is my intention to take the child and civilize it, if she will consent; but I have no idea that she will, for all the natives, and more particularly the women, are extremely fond and proud of their children.

I fear I must by this time have tired you with my anecdotes of the natives, and my stories of myself; but you will probably not have so much from me again, on any subject, in a hurry. The days will soon grow longer and hotter, and I shall then be travelling on discovery expeditions, or employed abroad as long as there is light; and when the sun goes down in the warm season, I have always been glad, although seldom permitted, to dedicate to sleep those hours which, in long evenings and colder weather, I have, when able, felt pleasure in devoting to this plain, unstudied narrative, hoping that the simple recital of novel scenes and characters may not prove altogether uninteresting.

CHAPTER III.

RETURN TO PORT STEPHENS OVERLAND—SATISFACTORY PROGRESS
OF THE SETTLEMENT—PREPARATIONS FOR A JOURNEY—AC-
COMPANIED BY THE NATIVES—THEIR GOOD-HUMOUR—THEIR
FEAR OF MEETING WITH STRANGE TRIBES—PLEASURES OF THE
JOURNEY—DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE NATIVES—FALL IN
WITH A STRANGE TRIBE—FRIENDLY MEETING—KANGAROOS—
MANNER OF HUNTING THEM.

I WAS desirous of seeing the country and the line of road over the mountains from Sydney to Port Stephens, and therefore on my way home after the trial mentioned in the first chapter, I went overland to Hunter's River, from which place I proceeded to Port Stephens (a distance of about seventy miles by the sheep track) with a recently emancipated convict, whom I had hired as a fencer at Sydney, and who informed me, as we bivouacked in the forest during the first night, that he had been transported *for attempting to rob his master*. He wrapped himself up in his blanket and slept before the fire, while I retired to rest in a small tent calculated for travelling and for the accommodation of one person only. In the middle of the night a heavy rain came on. My attendant's rest was consequently disturbed, and as he had neither shelter nor the means of procuring any,

I called him to my tent, and desired him to place himself in the best manner he could at my feet. His modesty and respect appeared to be in proportion to the desire I evinced to accommodate him in a case of such necessity. Under any circumstances I was in his power, and if his former disposition had returned to rob his master, there was nothing to hinder him; but I was then convinced, as I am now, that considerate treatment and a show of confidence will generally secure the best return. This man showed at the time a grateful sense of the accommodation; he had however got an advance of wages in Sydney, as was usual in such cases, and as soon as he found an opportunity after my return, he left the establishment in debt, with several runaway convicts, and I never heard more of him.

The country over which I travelled is mountainous and of the most barren description (as regarded herbage) for about fifty miles from the River Hawksbury to a small branch of the Hunter's River called the Wollombie. It is however covered in every part with trees of various descriptions, upon some of which I saw wooden pears growing with their small ends downwards. These so much resemble the eating pear, that any stranger might be tempted to gather them for that fruit. I saw also in abundance upon this mountain range green berries called currants, growing upon small vines not much larger than common wire, and climbing up low shrubs which every where grow under the trees; these berries are about the size and colour of small English white currants in their green state, and exceedingly acid even when ripe. They are never found but in the most barren districts, and are made use of only for preserves in the absence of

the European gooseberries and currants, which do not thrive in the colony. Bushels of them were gathered the same season on the south side of Port Stephens' harbour by the natives, and brought to the establishment for the families, who preserved them. A plant called the gigantic lily also flourishes on the tops of these mountains in all its glory. Its stems, which are jointy, are sometimes as large as a man's wrist, and ten feet high, with a pink and scarlet flower at the top, which, when in full blossom (as it then was) is nearly the size of a small spring cabbage. This range of mountains is in some parts rocky, (granite,) but in general it is covered with soil of a white cast, which is exceedingly poor; and although timber, shrubs, and wild flowers luxuriate upon it, scarce a blade of grass exists except in patches where the soil varies a little.

When I left the colony the government was making a road in this tract for a land-carriage communication between Sydney and the Hunter's River. The remainder of the journey from the Wollombie to Port Stephens (about one hundred miles) was over a broken country of various quality, but little of it good, with the exception of some comparatively limited tracks about that part of the Hunter's River and its branches, which are every where located, and in a state of progressive improvement.

I arrived at Port Stephens in October, and found that under the direction of my nephew every thing had proceeded in a satisfactory manner. Two substantial houses, one of brick and the other of stone, had been commenced before I was called to Sydney, and on my return I found them considerably advanced, as well as the foundation

laid for a range of workshops and other buildings. A flour-mill of four-horse power had been daily at work for some time, and the machinery for the erection of an extensive tide-mill had been ordered from England. Brick-making was also going on rapidly; and several large inclosures were commenced, while the timber which obstructed business in every quarter, was felled to a considerable extent. The garden too was now yielding its productions in abundance. Rations of fresh meat were also near at hand; for while I was at Sydney I made arrangements, with the committee's sanction, for the purchase of one thousand head of cattle of all descriptions, which arrived soon after my return to Port Stephens, and were sent to distant stations which I had previously selected, and where stock-yards, huts, and other conveniences had been provided for them. About two thousand sheep soon followed the cattle, and indeed every department was rapidly advancing. Our establishment had in six months progressively increased from seventy to two hundred and fifty souls. The situation of the free servants whom I had brought from England was such as to insure me their united and best exertions: the authority which I found it necessary to give them over the convicts, who were placed in parties under them, served to increase their importance, since it placed them in a higher station than that in which they had been accustomed to move at home, and disposed them to make common cause with me in the advancement of the numerous objects in view. Their isolated situation also did not admit of their being tampered with by designing and interested persons, as is generally the case in all new countries. Both their interest and their pride were en-

gaged in assisting to produce order out of chaos, and in transforming the solitary wilderness into the comfortable and agreeable abode of man; and so long as I possessed the means of keeping them in such a position, it was only consistent with human nature that I should calculate upon and always receive their zealous support.

The natives still kept up their friendly intercourse with us, and I continued to derive from them such assistance as they were able to give with cheerfulness and goodwill. Their services had almost become necessary to the families in carrying water, collecting and chopping firewood, and supplying them with fish, which they did in abundance. The native women and children were constantly in, or loitering about the doors of the huts, where it was quite common to see a black woman dressed up with an old gown and cap, and dandling in her arms the infant of a white woman; while others, especially young girls, frequently assisted their white neighbours at the wash-tub. Native children of both sexes too, were often seen at their games in all parts of the establishment with the white children; and it was no unusual thing to see a black man, for short periods, at one end of a saw, and a white man at the other, working together with as much cordiality as if they had both been of the same colour and nation.

Having determined upon taking a journey of examination into the more distant parts of the country, previous to the Company's finally deciding upon the boundaries of their grant; and on my intentions becoming known to the natives then at the Station, offers were immediately made by them to accompany me. As, however, it would have been inconvenient to me to take more than five or

six of them, I fixed upon five, who had assumed the following names: Wickie, M'Quarie, Wool (old) Bill, Maty (little) Bill, and Jemmy Bungaree. I had also with me three convict servants, who, with two of the natives, led five pack-horses, which carried my camp-equipage, and a supply of provisions for three weeks. We were armed with two rifles, two double-barrelled fowling-pieces, and a musket, and I had, besides these, a brace of pistols in my holsters: on this occasion I also took with me two brace of kangaroo dogs.

About the middle of the day on the 10th of *November*, 1826, I dispatched the horses to a certain spot on the banks of a river about sixteen miles from the Port, and in the evening I proceeded by water with another party of natives, who rowed me to the place of rendezvous, which we did not reach before nightfall. As soon as I had landed, some of the natives proceeded to collect fire-wood, which is scattered in great abundance in every part of the forest. A blazing fire was soon kindled, while others of the natives were employed in bringing water upon their heads from the nearest pool, and in assisting the white men to pitch and arrange my tent for the night.

Having finished these necessary preparations, tea was soon introduced. During this repast, which I made on the body of a fallen tree, my black friends had squatted themselves around the fire, smoking their pipes, and patiently awaiting their turn to partake of the favourite beverage. Our utensils were not many upon this occasion: they consisted of a tea-kettle, a large saucepan, a frying-pan, a few pewter plates, several tin pannicans, which served us for tea and drinking-cups, a spoon or

two, some knives and forks, and a few napkins. Our provisions consisted of salt pork, flour, biscuit, tea and sugar, with some ground Indian corn for the natives. My bed-clothes were simply a pair of blankets, my bedding was composed of long grass pulled by the natives, and spread upon the ground, and my pillow was a small velise, in which I carried my night-clothes and a change of linen. With these accommodations, and under the shelter of a small tent, I felt perfectly contented, desiring, under these circumstances, no better accommodation.

The weather being remarkably fine, each convict rolled himself up in his blanket, and slept between my tent and the fire, with the heavens for his canopy. The natives, who had always blankets provided for them upon these occasions, slept around the fire opposite to the convicts. The arms were placed against the pole inside my tent, and strapped to it by my shot-belt; while the horses were tethered and grazed within sight of the camp.

Nov. 11th.—The sun had no sooner made its appearance, than I was awoke by the chattering of the natives, who had risen to make the fire, and like so many children, were talking of the number of kangaroos they were likely to see on their journey, and the enjoyment the fire-arms would afford them as they travelled.

About nine o'clock we left our encampment, under the following disposition of our party. The three white men and two natives led each a pack-horse; Wool Bill wheeled the perambulator; Maty Bill led the dogs; and Jemmy Bungaree, with his rifle, accompanied me a little in advance of the party, to look out for game. Each of the natives had also a gun on his shoulder. This was a condition which they made with me before starting, in

consequence of their extreme fears of meeting with various tribes, who always call strangers to a severe account; and should there be any existing feud, which is frequently the case, occasioned either from some encroachment on their hunting ground, or perhaps the stealing each other's gins, (wives,) any unfortunate stragglers stand a good chance of being scarified, in revenge for the offences of their tribes. The pleasures, therefore, which my native companions anticipated from this journey, were sadly mingled with the fear of meeting the strange or "Myall pellowes," as they called them, as soon as they should have left their own grounds.

We proceeded in the order before described, about four miles through a rather poor but grassy country, alternating between low hills and flats, near the banks of the river Karuah. The ground was in general heavily timbered, and as usual, without underwood. After crossing a deep, and in some places a dry channel, which in rainy seasons would be called a river, the soil began to improve. The country gradually became less heavily timbered, and the views more extensive. This was in accordance with what I had been previously led to expect, and fully confirmed my former observations, that the poorest soils contained more than treble the number of trees that are found in the best soils, being also much longer and taller. This, like most other things in this strange country, is, I believe, nearly the reverse of what we find in England.

As we passed on this day towards a small river, the country suddenly became exceedingly beautiful and picturesque, consisting of low undulating hills, with only as much timber as was necessary to perfect the beauty of a

finely broken and varied country. I thought, at the time, I had never beheld so sweet a spot. The soil is exceedingly rich, although of comparatively small extent; and the country is most bountifully watered by two small rivers, which form a junction in the vale, and afterwards discharge themselves into the navigable river Karuah.

In the middle of our day's journey we were overtaken by what is called a hot wind. This heated state of the atmosphere, under a clear sun in the depth of an Australian summer, is no trifling inconvenience to an European traveller; the thermometer, upon such occasions, generally rising as high as 110.

We journeyed on, however, slaking our thirst at every pool we could find. I heard no grumbling during the day, excepting from Wool Bill, who had become tired of wheeling the perambulator, and made several attempts to get rid of it. He was at length caught with it *upon his head*, by way of relieving his arms, which spoiled any correct calculations of distance for this day. This event caused a little demur, and Wool Bill at last got rid of his troublesome office. After much altercation between the natives, it was transferred to Jemmy Bungaree; and Wool Bill, looking at me over his shoulder with a leer of cunning and pleasure, took his rifle, to look out kangaroo, as he called it, for the remainder of the day. After travelling only about seven miles this day, we bivouacked for the night on the banks of the Karuah, in the pleasant country before described.

Long before I fixed upon the spot, my black friends had been calling out, "Where nangry (sleep) to-night, massa? Black pellow most tired. Murry corban hot. Corse (horse) most tired, massa." As soon, therefore, as

the spot was fixed upon, and the horses brought up, they were instantly disincumbered of their burdens. The two natives, M'Quarie and Wickie, rubbed down their horses and led them to water, in the same manner as the white men did, and afterwards tethered them upon the grass, with all the consequence of boys when attempting to assume the manners and employment of men; looking round to me for approbation, and asking at the same time, "That do, massa?" "Yes," I said, "that will do very well, indeed; just as well as white pellow. All black pellows belonging to me are murry good pellows." This was assented to with a nod of the head; and M'Quarie then observed to Wickie, with a look of extreme pleasure and consequence, "Massa piola (says) all te same like it white pellow." "I tinky so all te same," says Wickie. They then followed me back to the encampment; M'Quarie, as he walked along, whistling gaily in imitation of a white man.

During this time the other blacks had been employed by the cook in arranging the luggage, collecting wood, and making the fire; also in bringing water from the river, and assisting in pitching my tent. Wool Bill was fixed at the frying-pan, and shaking it at proper intervals, to keep the meat from burning, with as much seriousness and dexterity as can be conceived. The exceedingly droll appearance, and the perfect good-humour of the party, were so highly amusing to me, that I believe I never felt in a happier mood than while I contemplated the group before me.

As soon as the preparations for dinner were completed, a quantity of flour was served out to the natives. They had already prepared a sheet of bark from a tree near

them, as a dish for kneading their flour in. They had been accustomed to see the convicts make their loaves and bake them on the ashes, and had by this time become quite expert in imitating them. They preferred a loaf in this way to any thing else ; but they were not very particular as to the baking, generally taking it out when little more than half done.

Tea always forms an accompaniment to my dinner when in the bush ; and as the natives are extremely fond of it, I always give them plenty. While their bread was baking they squatted down, and amused themselves before the fire smoking, and singing in their own language ; and soon after they had eaten their cake and drunk their tea they quietly sank to sleep on the spot where they had taken their meal, like children after a long day's play.

We made no attempt to course kangaroos this day. The weather was much too hot for the dogs ; and our stock of fresh provisions at so early a period of our journey rendered it unnecessary to seek for game, except for the support of the dogs.

The heated air in which we had been almost exhausted during the day, was as usual succeeded by a light, cool breeze in the evening. We all enjoyed a night of refreshing sleep, and arose in the morning quite ready for the exertions of the day. As soon as I left my bed, I proceeded to the river, on the banks of which we had encamped, attended by Wool Bill with my dressing apparatus.

This lad was of an extremely tractable and gentle disposition, and had, soon after my arrival at Port Stephens, in February, 1826, spontaneously attached himself to me ; and he ever afterwards *tit down*, as they call it, with

me. He was a great favourite of the cook's, daily performing for him various domestic services; and cleaning the knives and forks was exclusively assigned to him, at his own request. So jealous, indeed, was he of his place, that the introduction of any other native to the shed where his duties were performed, was the greatest affront that could be offered to him. I encouraged his disposition to domesticate himself by every means in my power; and as I was always much amused and pleased with him, I made him my body servant during the journey. As soon as we had discovered a proper place, he untied my shoes, took off my stockings, and washed my feet, while I was seated at the edge of the river. The quiet and regular manner in which he performed all this, and the ludicrous appearance of his figure and dress, with the gravity of his countenance when he said "dat do, massa?" forced from me a laugh, which I really had not the power to prevent. This gave him the idea that I had brought him there for the purpose of making sport of him, and he answered like a child, in a half-angry tone, "Gammon, I bleve." "No gammon," said I. "Murry good fellow, Bill. Like him very much. Belong to me always. Come, hold the looking-glass: I shave. Then you go patter (eat or drink) tea along with all black pellowes at the camp." The smile of reconciliation instantly beamed upon his countenance, and he assumed his accustomed importance in the performance of this fresh service which I had allotted him.

We were so well pleased with each other after this, that on our return to the camp, which was at a distance of several hundred yards, we gambolled all the way up, throwing small pieces of bark at each other, after the

manner of the native youths, who practice this with a view of strengthening their arms, and fitting them for hurling a curious weapon of war, called a *bomering*, which is shaped thus,



We broke up our encampment about ten this morning, and started in the order of yesterday. The wheeling of the perambulator, which was more a restraint than a labour, again became the subject of dispute amongst the natives. Wool Bill thought, and with good reason, that he had no right to be saddled with it every day; whilst the others, considering him as more particularly my servant, thought he had the greatest right to it.

While this was going on I called Bill aside, and told him that he should drink out of my cup with me at the pools, when we came to them, and that he should have some sugar at night. He directly returned, laughing, to the machine, clapping his hands on his thighs, and exclaimed: "I take him I bleve; I take him; bael me care;" and off he wheeled it, while Bungaree and Maty Bill began trying to wheedle out of me what the secret reward was.

The country as we proceeded, for the first two miles, was truly beautiful: it was thinly studded with single trees, as if planted for ornament. The species which prevail in this and in all the best forest soils are called apple trees, from their resemblance to that species of tree at home; and as they are, unlike most other trees in Australia, umbrageous with a lively green foliage, and

thinly but beautifully scattered over both hill and dale, the districts in which they are found form a striking, as well as an agreeable contrast to other parts of the country, which are in general thickly timbered, gloomy, and often uninteresting. It is impossible therefore to pass through such a country as I am now describing, without being perpetually reminded of a gentleman's park and grounds. Almost every variety of scenery presented itself. The banks of the river on the left of us alternated between steep rocky sides and low meadows: sometimes the river was fringed with patches of underwood, (or brush, as it is called,) with vines resembling ivy, creeping and spreading on the branches and to the tops of the wood, and forming a mass of impenetrable dark green, which, contrasted with the more lively hue of the green hills, the unfed herbage around, and the blue tints of the mountains in the distance, furnished scenes of exquisite beauty.

In new and unexplored countries, and especially in Australia, the traveller's road generally lies through woods, which present a distant view of the country before him, and conceal the more proximate scenes which are most agreeable to the mind when in search of novelty.

When such a fine open country therefore as I have just described, suddenly opens upon the traveller as he emerges from the comparatively dark forest, with all the advantages of a bright sun, in the most delicious climate in the universe; and when every thing is thus presented to him in all the freshness of nature, it is not easy to describe the sensations produced upon the mind. The first idea is that of an inhabited and improved country, combined with the pleasurable associations of civilized society. The solitary stillness however which prevails quickly de-

stroys this illusion: still, as you contrast its refreshing beauty with the wild and gloomy woods which you have just left, and indulge in agreeable recollections of some favourite place at home of which it reminds you, you feel an almost irresistible desire to linger on a spot where nature has been so bountiful, and in the excited feelings of the moment you think it an earthly paradise.

As we passed through the long grass, which frequently reached above the horses' knees, we observed places where herds of kangaroos had passed the night, and on crossing the river on the left we soon found ourselves in the midst of them. With a party like ours, shooting kangaroos was quite out of the question. They are much too quick of hearing and far too subtle to be approached by any persons less expert, cunning, and patient than a native, who can only steal upon them with his spear or musket, when alone.

Our dogs were now about to be let loose, but not without due caution, for where the game is too plentiful the dogs are soon tired out, and if not laid in well, the kangaroos by taking the hills, as soon as they can gain them, are almost sure either to beat or unsight the dogs. As these animals, from their weight, are rather inconvenient to carry through the day, I generally reserved the dogs till towards evening. But as we had not yet had any sport, I saw it would be difficult to restrain the natives at this moment; and wishing also to indulge them, I ordered my friend, Jemmy Bungaree, to look out and lay his dogs well in with the first kangaroo he saw.

I hardly need observe here, that all savages are fond of hunting; it is the chief business of their lives; and the frequency of the sport does not appear in the least to

diminish their relish for it. I know from experience that this is peculiarly the case with the natives of Australia, as was fully evinced on this occasion. The place in which we were was an extensive meadow, called a "blady grass flat," near the river. In the long coarse grass with which these flats are always covered, a species of small kangaroo is usually found, which the natives call the "Walloby." Their colour is darker than that of the forest kangaroo, approaching almost to that of a fox, and they seat themselves in the grass like a hare or a rabbit. As we passed on, therefore, they were continually jumping up at a distance from us. At the sight of these the blacks became excited beyond all control. Wool Bill took the liberty at once to abandon his perambulator, Wickie and M'Quarie started from their horses, the dogs and muksets were left behind, and they all simultaneously joined, whooping and hallooing, in pursuit of the game that was jumping in every direction around them. I joined also, with all my heart, in the chase after a walloby; but while in pursuit my horse suddenly stopped short at a fallen tree, of which there are always plenty in such places, concealed in the grass, and in an instant I was over its head upon the ground. Before I could recover myself my brother sportsmen had run down their game, and were exulting over it in language and gestures that bespoke pleasure of no ordinary kind. Had they witnessed the somerset I had just experienced, there would have been shouts of laughter, according to their custom, when any accident of a trifling nature occurs.

The game was soon strapped upon one of the horses, and as the wallobys had by this time been nearly all frightened out of the flat, we proceeded on our journey in

the usual order of march ; Mr. Bungaree keeping a sharp look out in front to lay in his dogs, in case another walloby should be started. This very soon occurred, when Bungaree slipped the collars of his dogs with as much dexterity as any white man could have done : at the same instant the natives all started with the dogs, and the poor walloby, after a hard run, was secured. This famous sport, together with the idea of so much “ patter” (food) kept the natives in a constant state of merriment and excitement. After this last run, I therefore hurried through the flat to avoid further delay, and on approaching the river, with the view of re-crossing it, Wool Bill gave a sly tug at my coat and put his hand up to his mouth, by way of reminding me of my promise in the morning, that he should drink out of my cup with me. I answered him with a nod and a smile, and hastened before the party to the river, closely followed by him, in order to drink each other’s health in private. The fact was, as he well knew, I had in my pocket a flask of spirits, and was in the habit, in very hot weather, of mixing a little with the water from the rivers and pools, when forced to resort to them. Bill and I therefore took our draught in private, in a nook of the river which was fordable in almost every part of it, and waited on the opposite side the arrival of the party, who had also stopped to refresh themselves and their horses at the pure stream.

I had always been anxious to prevent the natives from contracting a liking for spirits; but the intercourse which daily took place between them and so large a body of people on the Company’s establishment, rendered this impossible. The military guard, in common with many others, paid them too frequently in spirits, for the various

offices which they performed; and as, unhappily for themselves, they soon became more fond of spirits and tobacco than of any thing else, the former were always a ready bribe in the hands of those who wished to make use of them, either for good or bad purposes. For a long time I rigidly refrained from giving them spirits in any form, and endeavoured all in my power to prevent others from doing so; but as I could not personally devote more than a very small portion of my time to the regulations of the establishment to which they generally resorted, I could not have sufficient control on this point, so that my wishes were completely thwarted.

During very long and fatiguing journeys, and when they had been labouring hard at the oar, I occasionally gave them a little weak spirits and water, as a great favour, but never as a matter of course; nor did they in consequence ever expect it from me, although they would readily forsake every other gratification for it.

After our refreshment at the river, we journied on over a country less interesting than that which we had just left. The valley gradually became more contracted and more thickly wooded, and the soil less fertile; and although the grass was not so luxuriant as that before described, still it appeared of good quality, and calculated, from the dry nature of the stony hills on each side of the flats, to form sound sheep-walks. This kind of country continued for several miles, and after crossing a range of high rocky hills we descended rather suddenly into a beautiful little valley, watered by the river on our left, and surrounded on every other side by open grassy hills of considerable elevation.

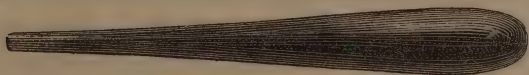
As the evening was fast approaching, I was induced to

pitch my tent near a pool of water at the junction of two small brooks that ran through the centre of the valley. A running stream during summer is a rarity in New South Wales. Even the most considerable rivers are sometimes dry, to the extent perhaps of a hundred yards, and then a small running stream appears which spreads itself in a thin sheet over the bed of the river, succeeded by a deep pool several rods in length. These rivers resemble the mountain torrents in the Highlands of Scotland and Wales. In wet seasons they suddenly rise very high, inundating all the lower lands in their vicinity, and carrying down even high trees and masses of rocks; and they have been known in some parts of the colony to rise as high as seventy feet above the common level. What appears at a distance to be a brook is but the channel of a stream, containing only small pools of water, at intervals of several hundred yards from each other.

The spot we were now at was rendered extremely picturesque from the gradual and easy slope of the hills, the sides of which were thinly studded to their summits by single trees, and covered with the most luxuriant herbage. It was sometimes difficult to persuade one's self, in contemplating these scenes, that the hand of art had never been employed upon them.

Our day's journey had been about ten miles. The natives had by this time proceeded beyond their knowledge of the country, and their eyes were constantly on the ground to see if they could discover any footsteps of strange natives. They had become dull and uneasy, and frequently expressed their fears, keeping close together and as near to us as they could. After fixing on the spot for our encampment, I invited Jemmy Bungaree and

Wool Bill to walk with me to the river, to "look out duck," as they call it. "No, no, massa," said Jemmy; "bael me go; me murry gerret (afraid.) Myall (strange) pellow tit down here dat patter (eat) me. Poor me no look out." I bantered him a good deal, and endeavoured to show him how well we were protected by our double barrelled fowling-pieces, &c. but all to no purpose. He was in the most perfect state of alarm, and fancied he could hear the wild natives calling to each other on all sides of him. Bungaree was altogether a curious fellow: he was both in appearance and manner a complete character in savage life. He was about twenty years of age, tall and thin, and, like the generality of the natives, his arms and legs were lean, possessing but little flesh or muscle. His cheeks and forehead, and generally his breast, were painted or rubbed with red ochre. His right leg had been broken when young, a little above the ankle, by a fall from a tree, when endeavouring to catch an opossum, and as it was crooked and rather shorter than the other, he limped a little. His native costume consisted of a belt of opossum fur, spun or twisted like coarse yarn, into skeins to the length of five or six yards, which was bound round his loins; his waddy, shaped thus,



was stuck in one side of his belt, and his tomahawk in the other. His long hair was turned up and bound about the head with opossum yam, having a tuft of grass in the centre sufficiently long to be seen above the hair, so as to present at a short distance the appearance of a plume, in the following shape:



In the hair, a little above the ear, was placed a small sharp pointed bone, from the leg of a kangaroo: this was used as a comb, or rather to unravel the hair with, when upon particular occasions it was turned down like a common mop. Excepting the ochre upon the cheeks and breast, the other blacks were in a similar state, and entirely without clothes: they are, however, as pleased with clothing as children with any new bauble, and will wear it in the presence of white men even under the greatest suffering from heat; still in summer they are much more comfortable without it, and will frequently take it off when they think they are unobserved. My men having been supplied with blankets to sleep under during the night, were quite satisfied; and having the promise of trowsers and a shirt when we should return to Port Stephens, they had a strong motive for not leaving me on the journey, whereby they would of course forfeit this reward. In all respects I found it necessary to treat them like children, and to watch every opportunity of influencing them by reason and conciliatory treatment, rather than by the exercise of stern authority; but when I found it necessary to be positive I was implicitly obeyed, however unpalatable my order might be to them. My object was never to be unreasonable, by *demanding* any thing which I believed was not necessary to their proper ma-

nagement, and to a right and useful understanding between us. By these means I procured over them an unbounded influence. Their subordination and attachment were put to the severest trial in their fears of their wild brethren of the woods, being in a strange country where, unless they had felt the fullest reliance on me, they would not have remained a single hour.

Bungaree, as I have before said, would on no account go with me to the river, nor stir an inch from the place where the party had stopped; and on my making a like proposition to Wool Bill, he begged most piteously that neither of us would go; that we should fall in with "bush black," and be roasted and eaten. I endeavoured to laugh him out of his fears, and rallied him a good deal by telling him that Jemmy was a great coward, that a white servant always followed his master, and that I had no doubt he would do so too. Bill cast his eyes upon the ground, and in a very soft and melancholy tone said, "What for go dere, massa? All tit down here; black pellow no come den." To this I answered that he might do as he pleased, but that I should go and look out duck. I then bid him good bye, and said, "Bill no belong to me now I believe, I look out another black fellow by and bye;" and I immediately turned my back and walked off towards the river. In an instant he called after me, "Massa, top bit, me go. Dimmy Bungaree no good, dat too mun gerret (too much afraid) I bleve;" and he was soon by my side with his fowling-piece.

I could easily see, however, that he was still under the influence of fear on account of the natives, and as we walked along the banks of the river, his eyes were constantly on the ground or looking forward, and he paid not the least attention to the search after ducks. I confess

I had no objection to see him keep a good look out. I was by no means desirous of alone encountering a tribe of savages; and I felt assured that if we should come suddenly upon them, my squire would take to his heels and leave me to manage as I could. He presently saw, or as I then believed, *fancied* he saw, footsteps on the long grass. He pointed them out to me, but I could see no signs of them whatever, and I continued to banter him as before; but he was not to be laughed out of his conviction, which afterwards proved to be correct. I still moved on however with poor Bill, who appeared in a perfect state of terror, till at length an animal called a guana (a very large species of lizard) jumped out of the grass, and with amazing rapidity ran, as they always do when disturbed, up a high tree. At the sight of this Bill forgot his fears of the natives, and called out with great animation, "Me toot him, massa! me toot him! murry corbon pellow! murry good patter!" and he ran towards the tree with the swiftness of a hare. I called after him and reminded him that if the bush blacks were near they would hear the noise of the gun. "Nebber mind, massa," he answered, "me toot him, den go camp; by and bye roast him." "Well," I said, "you may do as you please," and in an instant he fired, and the animal came rolling from the tree. Bill capered about, and was highly delighted with his guana, which was the largest I ever saw. He now pleaded very hard to go back to the camp, as well on account of the game which he wanted to eat, as to avoid a rencontre with the natives, whom he knew must be close at hand. I succeeded however in persuading him to hang his guana in a bush, and to proceed a little further with me. He consented with much reluctance, and on ascending a gentle acclivity we saw the

grass had all been burnt before us as far as the eye could reach, and so recently that the dead trees and logs of wood, which always lie scattered in abundance, were still smoking. As soon as he saw this he made a dead stop, his eyes rolling in every direction, and his head turned first on one side and then on the other to listen, as if his fears had conjured around him all the wild natives in the forest. Anxious to see what would be the result, I stood perfectly mute; at length, while still in a listening attitude, he exclaimed, "Alāh! (halloo) you hear him, massa?" "Hear what?" said I. "Bush black pellow." "No, no," I answered, "I don't hear them, nor you neither." "Murry stupid you!" he said, "I hear him plenty." "Which way?" said I. "All about! all about! murry tousend!—morū (go) back, morū back—look out camp, massa—black pellow toon come now—me no top, me no morū up dere." I still wished however to go on a little further, being persuaded that the natives were not nearer than the extremity of the burnt ground; and knowing too that it sometimes happens that the grass is consumed for many miles when the weather is very dry, and the wind favours the fire. I had now however no hope of urging my companion any further on, still I was desirous of trying the full extent of my fair influence over him; I therefore first reasoned with him, then laughed at him, and told him I wished to "look out duck for dinner;" after which I moved on, and he most reluctantly followed me, with a countenance which I shall never forget. In a few minutes he discovered numerous footsteps of men and children on the burnt ground. They were nearly as plain as I have seen foot-prints on the sea-shore, and showed that a pretty large number of natives had passed over the

ground, probably not long before our arrival upon it. “*You tee! you tee! no gammon now, massa! murry thousand! plenty piccaninny too.*” I knew we should see the smoke of their fire long before we approached it, and I therefore went on till I saw the green grass and a thick *brush* or jungle at the end of the burnt ground; and as I thought it extremely probable that the natives were there or not far off, I was not desirous to proceed any further then, and proposed to my companion to return. This was joyfully acceded to; and as we were about a mile and a half from our party, and ready for our dinner, we hastened back as fast as we could. The guana was not forgotten in our way; fear still operated upon poor Bill, and he frequently looked back, as if he felt that the natives were in pursuit of us.

Wool Bill was very different both in form and character from Jemmy Bungaree. He was scarcely full grown, being about five feet six inches in height, with a stout, robust frame, more like an European in his growth and form than the generality of his countrymen. His countenance was expressive of great mildness, and his general demeanour was manly, though rather slow and wanting in animation until aroused by some excitement. He was the reverse of Bungaree, who was as lively and talkative as a good-natured chattering schoolboy. Bungaree’s disposition was kind and affectionate; but his feelings being somewhat sensitive, he was quick in imagining injuries, and restless under them until reparation had been made, when he freely and generously forgave. A very remarkable instance of his temper and disposition occurred one day at Port Stephens; and as it is a practical contradiction to the assertion frequently made that the natives of

New South Wales are not above the level of brutes, I will here relate it.

On the occasion I allude to, Bungaree came to me in a state of extreme anger and agitation to complain that a white man had struck him because he would not consent to carry some burden for him on his head. I immediately confronted the accuser and accused. Bungaree in the first instance was violent, making use of the low slang language of abuse which the natives unfortunately learn from the convicts, with whom they are always intimate. The man, who was an emancipist, did not deny the charge, but said that the master with whom he had formerly lived would not have cared if he had killed a dozen of such useless vermin. Upon hearing this unwarrantable line of defence, I threatened to commit him for the assault, or to turn him from the establishment. Perceiving my indignation at his barbarous language, he soon became, or at any rate appeared humbled, when Bungaree whispered to me, "Bael hurt it, massa, only blow it up dat no pight me 'gain." I then dismissed the man with a suitable admonition, informing him that he owed his further employment on the establishment to Bungaree's wish that no further notice should be taken of the offence. The man immediately walked off, and I thought, as well as Bungaree, that he was sorry for what had occurred. Bungaree followed him, and called out, "Tom, Tom, chake hand!" Tom would not however turn his head. Bungaree still followed him, and actually pulled his arm from his side and shook his hand in the true spirit of forgiveness, while the fellow walked sulking off without uttering a word or paying the least attention to him. I then called him back, and reminded him that notwithstanding his con-

tempt of the natives, this poor black had shown himself to be vastly his superior, and that as his conduct was perfectly brutal, I should instantly order him to be discharged from the establishment. Bungaree appeared exceedingly mortified, and bid me good bye in a tone and with a countenance that exhibited more feeling than I had before believed could exist in the breast of a human being who had possessed so few advantages as he had done.

As soon as Wool Bill and I had arrived at the camp he was surrounded by his sable companions, who admired the game he had brought them, and after throwing it upon the fire just as it was, they began to question him sharply about the bush blacks. Bill told them all that had occurred. Poor Bungaree was frightened almost out of his senses, nor were the other three much less terrified at the narration. The guana was soon roasted and devoured, while the two fore quarters of the walloby, killed in the morning, were still roasting for them in the ashes. The flesh of the guana is whiter and more delicate than a chicken, and forms a favourite morsel with the natives whenever they can procure it.

My dinner, which consisted of fried bacon and kangaroo-steak, was now ready, and I left my friends, who were squatted round the fire, to enjoy their repast of kangaroo, and to talk of their own affairs.

Whenever we caught a kangaroo, the hind quarters, or as much of them as I required, as well as the fry, which is much superior either to that of a lamb or a calf, were always reserved for me. The natives like the employment of skinning the kangaroos, and they do it very dexterously. The head and the entrails the moment they were

separated were thrown into the fire, and turned with a stick till they were about half done, when they were fairly divided and eaten by them before dinner.

The kangaroo was then put upon the fire and cooked in the same manner. The natives always eat (when allowed to do so) till they can go on no longer: they then usually fall asleep on the spot, leaving the remainder of the kangaroo before the fire, to keep it warm. Whenever they awake, which is generally three or four times during the night, they begin eating again; and as long as any food remains they will never stir from the place, unless forced to do so. I was obliged at last to put a stop, when I could, to this sort of gluttony, finding that it incapacitated them from exerting themselves as they were required to do the following day.

This kind of gluttony belongs to savage life, and is not, I believe, peculiar to the natives of Australia; and although its indulgence may so far place them upon a level with the brute creation, still I know, from experience, that they possess reasoning faculties, and under proper management are perfectly susceptible of civilization.

After dinner I joined the natives at their fire, and endeavoured to keep them in good spirits, promising them some ommany (ground maize) boiled with sugar, before they went to bed. Their whole theme was the wild bush blacks: they could talk and think of nothing else. Bungaree proposed to return home, assuring me, in the most plaintive tone, that we should all be killed and eaten the next day if we went on. "Wool Bill," said he, "been see mandoehah (foot or footsteps) belonging to bush black: murry tousand tit down near de ribber, massa!" "Never mind," I said, "we have plenty of guns, and

we can soon shoot them all, if they attempt to injure us.”

“ No, no, massa! Wool Bill been piola me, too mun black pellow tit down most close up ribber. Murry thousand pear: kill all black pellow belonging to massa, and all white pellow too!” In this he was joined by all the rest; and the cook, who was a prudent, steady man, hinted to me aside, that he thought they would decamp during the night, and leave us to manage for ourselves. I was not without my suspicions of this too; but I endeavoured never to forget what they were, and to make every allowance for them. I had not at that time, indeed I never had on any occasion, the least idea that they meditated treachery or mischief of any kind: if they left me, I knew it would be only from the fear of strange natives; and as an instance of this kind had occurred in two natives who accompanied the surveyor and the Company’s secretary on a journey eighteen months previously, I did not certainly on this evening feel too confident that I should see my sable friends in the morning: still I hoped they would not quit us, feeling how difficult, if not impossible it would be to proceed without them.

The time for serving out the ommany and sugar being arrived, they amused themselves in boiling it, and cutting pieces of bark out of the trees to eat it from. After this we amused and excited them in every way in our power, and at length enticed them into a corrobory, (a native dance,) in which I joined, and raised their spirits to such a degree, as to cause them at last to shout in defiance of the Myall blacks.

The natives of Australia have, by some people, been accused of cannibalism, and the constant assertion amongst

them, that the strange tribes, or others with whom they are at variance, will eat them in case they fall into their hands, gives currency to this notion, and has probably been the origin of it; but as far as my experience and enquiries went, in the district in which I resided, I had no reason for believing that this practice existed amongst any of the tribes there.

The natives who domesticate themselves amongst the white inhabitants, are aware that we hold cannibalism in abhorrence; and in speaking of their enemies, therefore, to us, they always accuse them of this revolting practice, in order, no doubt, to degrade them as much as possible in our eyes; while the other side, in return, throw back the accusation upon them. I have questioned the natives who were so much with me, in the closest manner upon this subject, and although they persist in its being the practice of their enemies, still they never could name any particular instances within their own knowledge, but always ended by saying: "All black pellow been say so, massa." When I have replied, that Myall black fellows accuse them of it also, the answer has been, "Nebber! nebber black pellow belonging to Port Tebens, (Stephens;) murry corbon lie, massa! Myall black pellow patter (eat) always." I had, however, no fear of being eaten by the wild natives on the morrow, even though I should be killed by them; and in fact, I had no idea of either, although I had never before been in a situation exactly similar to that in which we were now likely to be placed.

Upon rising on the following morning, (Nov. 13th,) I found how useless had been my anxiety as to the continued fidelity of my sable friends, for they were all en-

gaged as usual, assisting the white people to water the horses and to prepare breakfast. Their petitions, however, to return home, being earnestly renewed, I told them that they might do so whenever they pleased, but that they could never "tit down" with me, or belong to me afterwards. This had the desired effect; and after we had taken our breakfast, and loaded our horses, we proceeded over the ground Wool Bill and I had traversed the preceding evening.

The valley in which we had been encamped was, on three sides, shut in by hills, intersected by the river at the bottom, (having the shape of a horse-shoe.) On approaching the stream, and turning round the hill on the right, a small glen of thinly-timbered land, about three quarters of a mile in breadth, broke upon our view. The country was open, and gently undulating as far as we could see, with chains of hills on both sides of considerable elevation, heavily timbered to their summits. Jammy Bungaree, with his fowling-piece, walked a little ahead of me in the most cautious manner, tracking the footsteps of the natives, like a well-trained setter drawing his game at a distance. The most intense interest was evinced by them all: Wool Bill had silently changed places with Wickie, as if he meant to save himself under cover of the pack-horse. Presently we came to the burnt ground, where the footsteps were minutely examined, and pronounced to have been left there the preceding day. We proceeded slowly and cautiously on towards our foes, as they were considered by the natives; but as their wandering habits seldom lead them to stay more than a day at any place, unless they have procured a plentiful supply of food, I did not feel at all certain that we should

fall in with them, although I was extremely anxious that we might do so.

Having proceeded a short distance beyond the spot which I had visited the preceding evening, Bungaree, who was a little in advance, suddenly crouched with one knee upon the ground, and with his left hand turned back in quick motion as if for us to stop, he called out with the most rapid articulation, "Black pellow! black pellow! black pellow!" I motioned to the party behind to stop, and on joining Bungaree and the other two natives who were with him, he pointed out, in the most cautious manner, the wild natives at a distance. I could not, however, see them: the sight of the natives being much quicker and longer than ours, they can discern distant objects which are quite invisible to us. All three of them were now in a state of extreme agitation; and Bungaree's disappointment was so great, at what he considered my stupidity, that he exclaimed: "O lort! O lort, massa! murry corbon tupid cobrer, (head,) what for no tee it? murry tousand tit down all about pire!" (fire!) We moved on a little further, when we stopped again, and I observed a considerable number of natives squatted round a fire as he had described.

The question now was, who should accompany me to the spot. Bungaree at once declared off most positively, and used all his rhetoric to dissuade me and his black friends from approaching them. I immediately sent him to the rear to join the party who were waiting at a distance, and appealing to Wickie and Maty (little) Bill, I laughed at Bungaree, and promised each a cotton neckerchief if they would advance with me and speak to the strangers. After some hesitation and talking between

themselves in their own language, Wickie said: "We go, massa, pose you go too." We then went on, and advanced within fifty yards of the whole tribe (which appeared to consist of about twenty in number) before they perceived us. We saw them sitting round a fire feasting upon kangaroo, with their spears piled against a large tree close behind them. As soon as they saw us they all jumped up in the utmost alarm, flew to their spears, and then huddled together in close order, holding their long spears above their heads, with their points upwards like halberts. I now ordered Wickie and his companion to make the sign of peace to them, which they did by waving the right hand over the head and then pointing to the ground. No return was made to this, in consequence of which the two blacks cocked their double-barrelled fowling-pieces and I drew my pistols from my holsters: no one I believe had reason to feel very comfortable at this moment. I however ordered the blacks not to fire on any account, but to make the sign of peace again and then speak to them. This was done; and an answer was returned in a very loud, and, as I thought, menacing tone. I enquired what they said, to which Wickie replied: "Top bit, massa, by and bye, me piola dat again I bleve." A good deal of loud talk, in the nature of an harangue on each side, then took place between the parties, the one waiting patiently till the other had finished. This at length ended in the strange blacks placing their spears against the tree as before, and with an invitation to join them. "Dat do, massa," said Wickie, "go on now I bleve." We advanced then to within twenty yards of them, when they suddenly, and without any apparent cause, snatched up their spears again and pointed them at me, as if they

were instantly about to hurl them. I now became seriously alarmed, and had not the least expectation of escaping unhurt; but whatever I might feel, it was now too late to recede, or show any signs of fear consistently with our own safety. My two black friends however stood firm, with their muskets cocked and pointed, as if waiting only for an order to fire; I was upon the point too of discharging my pistols at the strangers, and of ordering my blacks to fire also, when I called out to Wickie to desire the former to put down their spears, and if they did not, to fire upon them directly. Wickie threatened to kill them if they did not desist, and in a moment they threw their spears upon the ground, and scampered off to a thick bush by the side of the river, where they concealed themselves. I regretted exceedingly that any thing should have occurred to prevent the intercourse which I so anxiously sought; but felt the utmost satisfaction and even admiration at the firm conduct of my two companions at so critical a moment. It appeared to me so directly at variance with their previously expressed fears, that I did not at first know how to account for it. They did not exhibit the slightest alarm after they had faced and spoken to their opponents. On reflecting, however, on their habits and customs in war, when in contact with or in sight of native enemies, it was not difficult to reconcile their conduct upon this occasion with what had taken place before we came in sight of the strange tribe. It is contrary to their custom to flinch from their enemies when once engaged with or in sight of them; or even to show the slightest sense of pain from any wounds or hurts in whatever way they are received; and as upon the present occasion they were upon their

guard and well armed, their quick sight and extraordinary pliability of body would probably have placed them beyond danger from the spears. However unwilling, therefore, they may be to expose themselves to an enemy, when not excited to it from a desire of revenge, or from any other cause that draws them to quarrel with a neighbouring tribe, still when they do come in contact with each other, they show no deficiency in that kind of brute courage which is common to most if not all savages in other quarters of the globe. It is different, however, in their quarrels with white people, for as soon as they become acquainted with the destructive nature of fire-arms, they will never, though greatly superior in numbers, show their faces in opposition to them.

The sight of a single musket is sufficient to scatter a whole tribe in an instant, provided they know the use of it; and if they afterwards make any attack, it is by stealing upon their enemies unobserved and spearing them from behind a tree or bush, in which manner white people have sometimes lost their lives.

Upon the departure of the natives we approached their fire, where we found parts of roasted kangaroos, and the spears which they had scattered about in the hurry of their flight. I now requested Wickie to call to them in the brush, and to assure them we were friends and desirous of seeing them. He was soon answered in the same loud harangue as before, and in a few minutes two very fine and handsome men made their appearance, dressed in a similar manner to our own natives. They approached us slowly and unarmed; each one had a piece of kangaroo flesh hanging from his opossum girdle; their beards were short and thin, and they wore mustachios. The

countenance of one of them was remarkably fine, bearing a striking resemblance to a Roman face and head. The other was more like a handsome European: the colour of the latter was of a bright copper, while that of his companion was black. They each appeared to be about twenty-five years of age, of middle stature, perfectly erect in figure, and of an easy deportment. Some exchange of words immediately took place between them and my two natives, which I did not understand; this was succeeded by an offer of some kangaroo flesh from their girdles; the offer was accepted, and my two companions were instantly seen gnawing it at their ease, while a curious parley took place between the two strangers and myself. I held out my hand to them, but they could not understand this: they looked upon me with some suspicion, and receded from me as I advanced to shake hands. I desired Wickie to explain that it was a sign of peace and friendship: with his explanation they appeared somewhat satisfied, and put out their hands, each in his turn, at a respectful distance, leaning the body forward at the same time so as merely to touch my hand at arm's length with their fingers. My horse was an object of great curiosity; they eyed him and felt him all over, making signs of wonder to each other during the inspection. They then called aloud to their brethren in the brush, as if to invite them to come forward and see the wonders. I requested of my two blacks to urge them to come to us: I saw several of their heads peeping from the brush and behind the trees; but one only could be persuaded to come forward, who at length came boldly on and joined the other two. He was a very tall copper-coloured young man, with a short thin beard and mustachios, the

nose inclining to flatness, but otherwise his features were expressive and handsome, and he possessed a fine sonorous voice; he was exceedingly erect, easy, and independent in his manners, and very communicative. He was dressed similar to the others, and curiously painted with red ochre on every part of his body.

I now made signs for our party and the horses in the rear to join us; and made fresh but fruitless efforts to induce the wild natives, who were peeping at us through the trees, to do the same. My three natives who had just joined us, soon fastened upon the kangaroo flesh, which the strangers offered to them also, and a long and brisk conversation ensued between them all. I desired them to invite the strangers to Port Stephens, and to tell them that I would take care of them and treat them well. In return they promised to visit us, and offered me some of their kangaroo, which I felt obliged to decline. On a sudden a general laughing and pointing at Bungaree took place on both sides; and in answer to my enquiries as to the cause of it, I was informed, that one of the strangers had recognized him in consequence of having met him some years before when he was a boy, upon a visit with an intermediate and friendly tribe. Bungaree acknowledged the truth of this, and appeared much pleased at the circumstance. It is not customary with the natives of Australia to shake hands, or to greet each other in any way when they meet. The person who has been absent and returns to his friends, approaches them with a serious countenance. The party who receives him is the first to speak, and the first questions generally are, where have you been? Where did you sleep last night? How many days have you been travelling? What news have

you brought? If a member of the tribe has been very long absent, and returns to his family, he stops when he comes within about ten yards of the fire, and then sits down. A present of food, or a pipe of tobacco is sent to him from the nearest relation. This is given and received without any words passing between them, whilst silence prevails amongst the whole family, who appear to receive the returned relative with as much awe as if he had been dead, and it was his *spirit* which had returned to them. He remains in this position perhaps for half an hour, till he receives a summons to join his family at the fire, and then the above questions are put to him.

Having produced a favourable impression on the minds of our new acquaintances, and wishing to witness the effect of music upon them, I took from my pocket a small flute, which I always carried upon such occasions, and played them a tune. They stared at me in silence, but without any of the surprise I had calculated upon exciting. They were not, however, without some curiosity about it, as one of them advanced to me, and wished to examine the flute, which I gave him. He appeared to suppose that some animal had been making a noise from it, and examined the holes and the hollow at the end, as if he expected to find something in it, and then returned it to me very quietly. I again played upon it, but it appeared to make no further impression upon them.

I have never been able to account for the apathy of the wild natives this morning with respect to music, because they generally have an excellent ear for it, and those who usually attended me were in the habit of accompanying my flute in chorus, which they did in excellent tune and time. I was in the habit, and especially

when I wished to keep them cheerful, of singing and playing the following simple strain to them, with any words which the occasion might call for :

We all sit down to- ge- ther, we're all met here

to- ge- ther, we're bro- thers all to- ge- ther,

ye- o, ye- o, ye- o.

and when they were rowing me in the boat, they would frequently change on a sudden the above words to the following: "Massa like him black pellow, massa like him black pellow, all te same as bingeeye, (brothers,) yeo, yeo, yeo." Some of the convicts afterwards taught them to sing the following words:

"We all sit down together,
We all get drunk together," &c. &c.

The latter part I would not allow them to sing in my hearing, explaining to them my reasons. These words were therefore never again introduced in my presence, unless they wished to have a joke with me, when they would sometimes repeat them in the last bar, holding their hands up to their mouths, leering at the same time at each other and at me; but, on finding that I refused to join, and that I made signs of dissatisfaction, they would break into a shout, or rather a scream of

laughter, one or more calling out, "Dat no good; bael massa like him; black pellow no more gammon; dat only make bleve, massa."

I once put a musical snuff-box into the hands of one of my domestic natives. He held it to his ear and laughed, then examined it all over, and put it to his ear again, and after apparently reflecting upon the cause of the music from the box, he imagined it to have been filled with musquitoes, whose buz resembles that of a gnat, and he remarked, very sharply, "Musquito tit down here, I bleve, massa."

The wild natives of the forest showed more curiosity as to our horses than they did about us. They had evidently never seen one before, and probably had never heard of the existence of such an animal; but as one of them had an iron tomahawk in his girdle, there is no doubt of his having been made acquainted, through the medium of other tribes, with the residence of white men in the country. I wished very much to examine the tomahawk, to see if it bore the Company's mark; but I had some difficulty in getting him to trust me with it. I found it had no stamp upon it, and I could not therefore tell from what quarter of the country it had been received; but I have no doubt it was obtained from the upper districts of the Hunter's River, or its branches. I understood from our natives, that exchanges of articles sometimes took place between the coast-natives and those residing in the interior. Iron tomahawks, sea-shells, with which they scrape and sharpen their spears, and pieces of glass, which they use for that purpose whenever they can get them, were thus frequently exchanged for opossum skins, and sometimes for the belts of yarn ready manufactured, as well as a small

opossum band of net-work, which they wear on their forehead when in full dress. This article is beautifully manufactured, and appears the more extraordinary, when it is considered that it is done entirely with the fingers, without the aid of needle or mesh. The opossums are more numerous inland than they are near the coast, and this is the reason why such an exchange takes place.

As soon as I had returned his tomahawk to the stranger, his countenance exhibited marks of satisfaction and pleasure, and he then began to show me, by signs, the use of it. I was already quite aware of the purposes to which they applied it, but there was *one* use made of it which he seemed anxious to explain to me, by pointing to the branches of the trees, and smacking his lips, as if something superlatively good was taken from them by the tomahawk. I had no doubt that he meant the wild honey, and asked Bungaree if I was correct in my idea. After exchanging a few words with the stranger, he answered: "Yes, massa, yes, choogar-bag; dat mean choogar-bag," pointing to a branch of a tree as he said it. The strange native instantly catching the sound and the idea, pointed with his tomahawk to the tree, and nodding his head and smiling at me, repeated the words, "Choogar-bag, choogar-bag, choogar-bag!" (sugar-bag,) their English expression for honey, or any thing sweet.

Of all the natural produce of the forest, there is nothing of which they are so fond as of the wild honey; and in traversing the woods, their eyes are almost always cast up to the trees in search of it. It is found in considerable quantities, and is much superior to European honey. The bee by which it is made is very small, and has no sting: it is rather longer and more slender than a

common fly, but very much resembles it in other respects.

As our object was to follow up the course of the river, I desired Bungaree, when we were on the point of parting with the natives, to enquire of them which direction it took, and where its source was. They described, with their fingers, its various bends, pointing to the north-east, as indicating its source to be in that direction, which information ultimately proved to be correct. I then presented the strangers with a tomahawk; and as they were not now afraid to approach me, we cordially shook hands, and took our leave, not doubting, that sooner or later we should meet again, and become better acquainted, which eventually proved to be the case.

After leaving these natives, we passed over a fine grassy forest country, consisting of low hills with high ranges on our right, the river running to our left, behind a thickly-timbered flat of inferior soil. After this, the range on our right gradually closed upon an apparently impenetrable brush or jungle of vines on our left, leaving us the choice of ascending and traversing the precipitate side of the range, or of cutting our way through the brush. I determined upon the former; but after several hours of labour and fatigue amongst the rocks, loose stones, and deep ravines, we were obliged to retrace our steps, and cut our way through the brush. We had no little trouble in accomplishing this: these places are generally thickly timbered with very large trees, called the blue gum, flooded gum, and cedar. In the intermediate spaces a species of vine grows, from the size of a man's finger to the thickness of his arm, which spreads in every direction, first on the ground, and from thence to the tops

of the highest trees, from which they hang nearly to the earth in festoons. A horse is frequently caught by the hind leg in going through them; but when he becomes accustomed to it, he will stand patiently with his leg suspended until the vine is cut with a knife or tomahawk. The rider also is frequently entangled, and sometimes pulled from his horse.

In situations however like that which we were approaching, no progress could be made without pioneers preceding us. This office was performed with great expertness by my black friends, who could use the tomahawk or the axe with an adroitness scarcely credible: by their assistance we struggled through this brush, which proved about a mile in length, when we again met the river, which ran round the bush on the left.

We came out upon a thickly-timbered blady grass flat, from which several large kangaroos started up. Jemmy Bungaree instantly let loose his dogs, and joined with his black companions in the chase. We soon however lost sight both of dogs and kangaroos, but after waiting a short time the former returned, and showed undoubted signs of their having killed their game. The natives could easily have tracked them if I had been willing to spare the time, but we proceeded at once on our journey, and in about a quarter of a mile from the spot where we gave up the chase, Bungaree suddenly called out, "Black pellow! black pellow, massa!" and went creeping behind the trees towards them as if he had been endeavouring to shoot a pigeon or a kangaroo. I immediately saw two natives walking quietly at a short distance, one of whom had a large kangaroo on his shoulders. They did not perceive us, and I desired Bungaree to call to them and ask them

to stop. He did so; but the moment they saw us the kangaroo was thrown down, and they ran with the swiftness of deer, without looking behind them till they were nearly out of sight. On examining the kangaroo, we had no reason to doubt that it was the one which our dogs had just before chased and killed, and which the natives had accidentally found in their path. The kangaroo was then strapped to one of the pack-saddles, and we again proceeded on our journey.

The country on our right consisted of high and poor stony hills thickly timbered; that on our left, on the opposite side of the river, was a rich and thinly timbered country. A low and fertile flat or meadow there skirted the river, and at the extremity of the flat the hills gradually arose with a gentle slope, covered with verdure, upon which an immense herd of kangaroos was feeding. I crossed over with Maty Bill and a brace of dogs, leaving the party to proceed on their route. The moment we had crossed, the kangaroos moved off. It is extremely curious to see the manner in which a large herd of these animals jump before you. It has often been asserted in England that they make use of their tails to spring from when they are pursued: this is not correct; their tails never touch the ground when they move, except when they are on their feed or at play, and the faster they run or jump the higher they carry them. The male kangaroos were called by my natives, old men, "wool-man;" and the females, young ladies, "young liddy." The males are not so swift as the females, and the natives in *wet* seasons occasionally run the former down when *very* large, their weight causing them to sink in the wet ground, and thus to become tired. They frequently however make up for

this disadvantage by fierceness and cunning when attacked either by men or dogs, and it is exceedingly difficult for a brace of the best dogs to kill a "corbon wool-man." When they can they will hug a dog or a man as a bear would do, and as they are armed with long sharp claws, they frequently let a dog's entrails out, or otherwise lacerate him in the most dreadful manner, sitting all the while on their haunches, hugging and scratching with determined fury. Young dogs, that are fierce and of good bottom, are almost sure to be sacrificed if allowed to run at these "old men" before they have acquired some experience with smaller ones. After having been once or twice wounded, they get pretty cunning, and very few dogs will attack a "wool-man" when they are away from their keepers: their practice is to keep the enemy at bay, by running round and barking at him till some person comes up, when either with large sticks or pistols, and the aid of the dogs, he is finally despatched, but not without some difficulty and caution. A full-sized "wool-man" at bay always sits on his haunches, and when he rises to move forward he stands four or four-and-a-half feet high. In this manner he will, when pressed, meet a man and hug and scratch him, if not to death, in such a way as he does not soon forget it. When hard pressed and near to water, the kangaroo always takes it; if it be deep water and the dogs follow him, one or the other is almost sure to be drowned. If a single dog, the kangaroo is nearly certain to come off victorious, by taking his assailant in his forearms, and holding him under the water till he is dead; but if he has two dogs opposed to him, he is not left at liberty to hold either of his opponents long enough under to drown him, and he generally himself falls a sacrifice,

after a long and hard struggle. Notwithstanding the courage and ferocity of the kangaroo when pressed, he is otherwise extremely timid, and more easily domesticated than any wild animal with which I am acquainted. The smaller ones are frequently quite as swift as a hare, and I have sometimes seen them outstrip the fleetest dogs. The kind of dog used for coursing the kangaroo is generally a cross between the greyhound and the mastiff or sheep-dog; but in a climate like New South Wales they have, to use the common phrase, too much lumber about them. The true bred greyhound is the most useful dog: he has more wind; he ascends the hills with more ease; and will run double the number of courses in a day. He has more bottom in running, and if he has less ferocity when he comes up with an "old man," so much the better, as he exposes himself the less, and lives to afford sport another day. The strongest and most courageous dog can seldom conquer a wool-man alone, and not one in fifty will face him fairly; the dog who has the temerity is certain to be disabled, if not killed.

The herd of kangaroos we had thus come upon was too numerous to allow of the dogs being let loose; but as the day's work was drawing to a close, I had given Maty Bill liberty to catch another kangaroo, if we should fall in with a single one. After moving up to the foot of the hill, about a quarter of a mile from the river, my sable companion eyed a "corbon wool-man," as he called it, quietly feeding at a distance on the slope of the hill. His eyes sparkled, he was all agitation, and he called out, "Massa! massa! you tee! you tee! wool-man! wool-man! *corbon* wool-man!" and off he ran with his dogs till he was within a fair distance, when he slipped their collars. I was at

this time on foot, and the whole of them therefore were soon out of my sight. They had turned round the bottom of the hill in the direction of the river, and as I was following them down I heard the dogs at bay, and the shrill call of "*coo-oo-oo*" from my companion, to direct me to the spot; and on turning the corner of the hill I met him running and calling as fast and as loud as he could in search of me. As soon as he saw me he stopped and called out, "*Massa! massa! make haste; dingo (dogs) been got him in ribber. Murry corbon wool-man, all te same like it bullock.*" All this was said in a breath, and as I could not pretend to run with him, I desired him to go as fast as he could, and help the dogs till I should arrive. When I got up to the spot, he was in the middle of the river, with about two feet depth of water, while the kangaroo, sitting upright on its haunches, was keeping both him and the dogs at a respectful distance, and had laid bare the windpipe of one of the dogs. Bill's waddy was too short to reach him without coming to close quarters, and he knew better than to do that; at length he got behind him, and with one blow on the head he dispatched him. No huntsman could have shown more ardour in pursuit, or more pleasure at the death of a fox, than did poor Maty Bill upon this occasion. The kangaroo was so heavy, weighing above one hundred and fifty pounds, that we could not lift him out of the water, and we were obliged to leave him till our party arrived on the opposite side. A fresh scene of pleasure ensued amongst the natives when they became acquainted with our good fortune. They were soon all in the river, from whence they drew the "*wool-man,*" and placed him on the back of one of the horses.

I wished to have left him, as we had already enough ; but as they were eager beyond any thing to take him, I indulged them. It appears that the natives have a great partiality for the flesh of the old and large kangaroos, just as we have for mutton or venison of a proper age. I never could discover any difference in flavour ; but if they can partake of a " wool-man," they refuse any other : and when asked the reason, they replied to me, " Wool-man budgerree (good) patter. Black pellow like him always more better."

CHAPTER IV.

CONTINUATION OF JOURNEY—LIABILITY OF EUROPEANS TO LOSE THEIR WAY IN THE BUSH—ANECDOTES IN ILLUSTRATION—BEST MEANS TO BE ADOPTED ON SUCH OCCASIONS—PRACTICAL PROOF OF THEIR EFFICACY—EXTREME SAGACITY OF THE NATIVES IN THIS RESPECT—OBSERVATIONS ON THE NATIVES—KANGAROO FEAST—FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE NATIVES—AUTHOR'S VIEWS CONCERNING THEM MISREPRESENTED—SUPERSTITION OF NATIVES—METHOD TAKEN TO DIVEST THEM OF IT—OBSTRUCTIONS CAUSED BY THE INACCESSIBILITY OF THE COUNTRY—CROSS THE RIVER—DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY—AUTHOR LOSES HIMSELF—A NATIVE ENCAMPMENT—GUNYERS—NATIVE DOGS—DISLIKE OF THE NATIVES TO PROCEED FURTHER—DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY—ANOTHER NATIVE ENCAMPMENT.

AFTER the pleasures of the chase were over, we at length proceeded on our journey, about two miles further, over a less fertile and more thickly-timbered country. The prospect was confined and somewhat gloomy, after the beautiful country through which we had passed. At length, coming to a thinly-timbered and rich flat on the banks of the river, we halted for the night, after a journey of eleven hours. Having pointed out the spot for our bivouack, I invited my favourite, Wool Bill, to take a *ride* while the dinner was preparing. This was readily accepted, and he was soon mounted on horseback, and

rode off with me. I went on wherever I found the country sufficiently open and inviting, and ascended several considerable hills, in order to get the best possible view of the surrounding country. I generally carried a small pocket-compass with me; but when a native is present there is no necessity for this: they can at any time point the true direction of the spot from whence they come, and proceed directly to it however distant it may be. If an European goes into the forest alone, there is nothing more puzzling than to find his way back again, even for a single mile or less; and nine people out of ten would never, except by accident, return to the spot they had left. Many a man has lost his life in this way: he wanders about in a dreadful state of alarm, and the further he goes the more he is bewildered, till at length he is worn out with hunger and fatigue, and lays himself down to die. Several instances of this kind occurred to persons under me at Port Stephens. In one case, one of our men was picked up in the very situation I have now described, by a stockman belonging to a settler on Patterson's River, after he had wandered six days without food. By great care his life was preserved, and he lived to tell his tale to me. He was found no less than thirty miles in the opposite direction to that in which he wished to go. From his own account he must have travelled at least a hundred and fifty miles during the six days, and was several times near the track from which he had incautiously strayed. He was a convict, and had been an old gamekeeper and poacher in England, and was therefore more likely to have his wits about him in such a situation than in many others. The *flagellator* also lost himself in a similar manner, and was without food for eight days. None of

his comrades wished for *his* return, I believe. He was, however, picked up by the natives on the sea-coast, about forty miles from the spot from which he had lost himself; and although before our arrival at Port Stephens these tribes had invariably stripped and speared every white man they had caught between Port Macquarie and Newcastle, they took the greatest care of this man as soon as they found he belonged to me, and brought him home to Port Stephens. He not only owed his safety to them at the moment he was about to have expired from hunger, but he was also indebted to them for the care they afterwards took of him with regard to the *manner* of feeding him. They had a plentiful supply of fish at their fire, and the poor starved man would have eaten too greedily of them had he been allowed. They first gave him the head only of a roasted fish, and when he asked for more, one of them answered, "No, no; dat no good: by and bye more." In a short time they gave him more, and fed him by degrees till they thought he could bear a full meal.

There is scarcely a location in the colony which is not situated on or near a river, or on the sea-coast. The waters for many miles around fall into the river or sea near to them: it has always, therefore, appeared extraordinary to me that it could not occur to a man, when he lost his way, that his only safe plan was to follow down the first channel he met, whether dry or not. It is obvious that the course of the waters must lead him to some part of the great outlet from which he had departed, and ultimately to his home. Simple as this idea appears, yet how many have been lost from its not occurring to them! Of course I took care, after these accidents, to promulgate

it to all the establishment at Port Stephens; and I intended to have caused it to have been made known to every new assignment of convicts on their landing, together with other useful and necessary hints to new comers. Should this meet the eye of any persons going out to a new settlement, I hope the hint will be of service to them. I was several times lost in the forest, and upon the first occasion soon after my arrival, when one of the Company's servants was with me. We wandered about several hours: the sun was getting low when my companion proposed to find a proper resting-place for the night. He had previously insisted that he could find his way home; and as I thought him better acquainted with that part of the country than myself, I followed him. He was in the utmost state of alarm, although I was not in the least so; because I knew I could untimately get home by following down the course of the waters. I determined, after his judgment had failed, to make the experiment; and though he followed me with much reluctance, in less than three hours we regained the settlement, without having encountered a single difficulty.

To return to my narrative. Wool Bill and myself being well mounted, we rode pretty hastily over such parts of the country as our time before dinner would admit of, not reflecting how we were to find our way back. I think we must have been at least four miles from the camp. At length Bill said, "Urokah tit down murry toon, I bleve, massa;" meaning that the sun would soon set. I answered, "I think so too, Bill: which way camp?" He pointed immediately in the direction of it. Supposing it to be in the opposite quarter, I told him he must be wrong. Bill however laughed, and continued pointing

in the same direction. I was still sceptical, and called out, "No gammon, Bill." He then burst into a loud fit of laughter at my stupidity, and said, "Bael gammon, massa! Me moru (go) pirst, you come close up: I chow it road." He then put his horse upon the gallop, and I followed him *close up*, as he called it; while he took me to the camp, through all the windings of the hills, without once stopping or hesitating.

I have always been at a loss to account for this faculty, because the natives never appear to make any observations as they go on; and they will point and travel as accurately when the sun is obscured, as when it is visible: so that it cannot be the sun which guides them. It appears to me to be as difficult of solution as the influence or instinct which directs the carrier-pigeon; for I am well assured that if a native of Australia were taken in the dark one hundred miles from his home, in an unknown direction, he would easily find his way back, although he seldom, in his natural state, travels out of his own district, which rarely extends beyond fifteen or twenty miles in any direction.

On our arrival at the camp we found every thing in readiness for dinner. The place looked like a flesh-market, with such a quantity of kangaroo hanging in quarters upon the trees. The blacks were all in high good-humour at the idea of so much "patter." They had got a blazing fire, and had reserved a luncheon (part of a kangaroo's head) for Wool Bill; but the superior tit bit (the entrails) had been previously disposed of. In an instant my companion was seen gnawing, like a dog, a half-roasted kangaroo's head; thus at one moment displaying an intelligence worthy of civilization, and in the

next indulging in habits but little above those of the animals of prey in the forest. But let us be just towards them. I know the poor and unprotected natives of Australia have been traduced by many, who have ascribed to them, exclusively, customs and practices which are common to *all* human beings in uncivilized life; and I have seen observations made upon them in print by well-meaning people, who write without the necessary information, attributing to them habits which have no existence amongst them, and which would place them *quite* upon a level with brutes. It has been said that they will eat even dogs in a state of putridity, and that they will drink polluted ditch-water. I can only say, that I never saw an instance of their attempting to eat flesh of any kind uncooked: on the contrary, they have a great aversion to it, although, as I have before stated, they are not in the habit of roasting it according to our notions and tastes. As to their eating putrid animals, I have many times seen them take up dead and putrid kangaroos in the forest, and throw them down again with looks and gestures expressive of abhorrence; and the same with fish, which are sometimes found dead and putrid on the sea-shore. Both from observation and conversation with them on this subject, I can say that they are remarkably particular in this respect; nor did I ever hear, out of England, that dog's-flesh formed any part of their food. I am satisfied it does not; but supposing it to have been the case, they have the example of some of the eastern nations to keep them in countenance, and especially the Chinese, who expose for sale in their shambles both dogs and cats for the table.

In their choice of water they are particular above all

things. It sometimes happens, in dry seasons, that water is very scarce, particularly near the shores. In such cases, whenever they find a spring, they scratch a hole with their fingers, (the ground being always sandy near the sea,) and suck the water out of the pool through tufts or whisps of grass, in order to avoid dirt or insects. Often have I witnessed and joined in this, and as often felt indebted to them for their example.

They would walk miles rather than drink bad water. Indeed, they were such excellent judges of water, that I always depended upon their selection when we encamped at a distance from a river, and was never disappointed. I speak only from my own experience. It is possible that other practices may prevail in other districts, but as I was in almost every part of the colony during my residence in New South Wales, and was never an uninterested or inattentive observer of the habits of the natives, I think, if such practices as I have denied the existence of had prevailed, I must have heard of, though I did not witness them.

The most revolting custom that I ever saw amongst them, was their manner of eating the entrails of birds and beasts, which, though they always emptied, they never would wash. They cooked them, however, much longer than any other food, and as they were always taken out of a hot fire much shrivelled and rather burnt, the substances left on the inner coat were probably consumed in a great measure, if not entirely, by the fire; but I do not pretend to *know* this, never having gone so far as to join in a repast of the kind. I think, however, that even this practice, in a *savage*, is as easily to be justified as many which we know of in civilized life, when the comparative

advantages of men in their respective states are fairly estimated. The Russians, it is said, are fond of train oil; and I have also heard it said, that in one of the most considerable cities in England, a dish of stewed snails was considered a delicate supper; and I have often seen the very blood of animals, which the Australian savage abhors, collected as it flows from the dying victims, to be afterwards served up in the shape of puddings at the tables of those who consider themselves the most civilized and refined! It is curious to observe the progress in refinement of taste in uncivilized as well as civilized men. I have seen the Australian natives eat, with much relish, the damaged and musty flour scraped from the sides of the casks. By degrees, as they became acquainted with that which, to *our* tastes, was of a better description, they refused that which before they so much enjoyed, and which appeared to have agreed perfectly with them. I apprehend that a refinement in animal tastes usually accompanies intellectual improvement to a certain extent: if not, the Australian savage has in this respect the advantage of us. His fare is simple, his cookery equally so, his tastes are not vitiated, and the means therefore of his subsistence are every where within his reach. He has no occasion to dig or saw, or to build houses and plant vineyards. He can eat either the kangaroo or the lizard, the oyster or the grub, all of which exist in the greatest abundance around him. We can join him in the kangaroo and oyster, while we recoil at the lizard and the grub. Where is the difference? the latter are as tender and as wholesome as the former. The black eats the grub without cooking; do not we the same with the oyster? He laughs at us for our distinctions, and cannot understand

them; and I suspect it is habit only, and not reason, that enables us always ourselves to understand them. I would therefore recommend those who would place the Australian natives on the level of brutes, to reflect well on the nature of man in his untutored state in comparison with his more civilized brother, indulging in endless whims and inconsistencies, before they venture to pass a sentence which a little calm consideration may convince them to be unjust. But I must leave my moralizing, to join my friends round the fire in the forest in their feast of kangaroo.

While Wool Bill was enjoying his patter from the roasted head of the kangaroo, the others seated themselves by the fire with their pipes, and talked over the adventures of the journey. The meeting with the strange natives was the chief subject of conversation, which was held principally in their own language, but occasionally in broken English. Seated, as usual, on a pack-saddle at the mouth of my tent, with a piece of painted canvas spread on the ground for a table-cloth, and a plate of kangaroo fry and bacon in my lap, I could listen unobserved to the conversation that was going on. The little that I understood of their language, and their occasional use of mongrel English, sufficed to give me a clue to it. I understood clearly that one of the strange natives had informed them that he had a wife and several pickaninnies (children) at an encampment on the hills at the back of us, and that a good many women belonging to the tribe were at the same place. A proposition was made by one of my natives to go and steal a gin (wife;) this excited a good deal of mirth amongst them, and they appeared as if they actually fancied themselves on the spot. At length I gave them to

understand that I was aware of their intentions, upon which screams of laughter took place. "I bleve," said M'Quarie "murry pretty girls tit down there, massa; me go look it out by and bye. Me tingle (single) man I bleve. Look out black gin good while ago; bael get him yet."

The blacks generally take their wives from other tribes, and if they can find opportunities they steal them, the consent of the female never being made a question in the business. When the neighbouring tribes happen to be in a state of peace with each other, friendly visits are exchanged, at which times the unmarried females are carried off by either party. The friends of the girls never interfere, and in the event of her making any resistance, which is frequently the case, her paramour silences her by a severe blow on the head with his waddy while he is carrying her off. He keeps her at a distance till her friends are gone, and then he returns with her to his tribe; but if the girl has no objection to her suitor, or has no one in her eye that she likes better, she agrees to become his gin, thus rendering abduction unnecessary and unusual.

I informed M'Quarie that he must not take a gin without her consent; and that as we wished to be friends with the strange tribe, they must not interfere with their women. I had, however, no idea that they were really in earnest about it, for I did not believe that they would have courage for the attempt so far from home, and especially in the night, during which they are generally afraid to stir a rod from their fires, even in their own district, being in fear of what they call "Debble, debble," or in their native language, "Coen," which means an evil spirit of the woods, and which they say "crammer (steals) black pellow when nangry (sleeps) in bush." The

joke of stealing the gins was not however stopped during the evening, and as they were all single men, they played off upon each other accordingly. I asked Wickie why he did not marry; he answered: "Too mun (many) pick-aninny, massa; too much cry about: look out black gin by and bye;" and as he uttered the last sentence he gave a sly look towards the hills; after which he said, holding up both his hands with his fingers spread out: "Murry tousand moon den come wool-man; den bring misses (Mrs.) home black camp." The sly rogue meant to say that he would not marry till he was an old man; but I have reason to believe that they always marry young, and that *none* of them ultimately remain unmarried. Polygamy is not common amongst them, although it sometimes occurs. I knew only three instances of it, and the wives (of which one man had three) lived, as far as I saw, in perfect harmony with each other, sitting at the same fire together like sisters. The husband and wife are in general remarkably constant to each other, and it rarely happens that they separate after having considered themselves as man and wife; and when an elopement or the stealing of another man's gin takes place, it creates great, and apparently lasting uneasiness in the husband. They are, however, decidedly a cold people, which I think is partly attributable to nature, and partly to their manner of living; but although they are not so violent in their preferences and attachments, they are steady and faithful amongst themselves.

No opportunities have as yet occurred where the slightest chance has been afforded of doing them any *permanent* good. There have been many attempts by well-meaning and even zealous people, to better their

condition, but so long as they come in promiscuous contact with the convicts, and so long as the use and abuse of spirits prevail, any attempts on the part of individuals to civilize them are utterly hopeless; but as I shall have occasion to speak more at large upon this subject by and bye, I will dismiss it for the present, and return to my tent in the bush, where I left Wickie describing by his fingers the great length of time that was to pass before he should be married.

The fear of meeting with strange natives was now forgotten, and the dinner of kangaroo with the tea and "moke," (smoke,) which followed, had placed them quite at their ease in their usual position around their fire.

My aim always was, to leave them as much as possible to their own natural impulses, as far as they did not materially interfere with the two objects I had in view, viz. to improve their understandings, and to make them useful. To have attempted every thing at once would have been to perform nothing beneficially. In order to render them easy and happy, it was necessary to prevent them from entertaining an idea that they were under unreasonable restraints; and I took care always to inform them, that if they wished to leave me and return to the forests, they could do so whenever they pleased. I had by this time established the principle that no one should receive food or clothing without having earned them by services; they had therefore the power of choosing between their old pursuits and consequent self-dependence, and their being well and kindly treated, upon the performance of the duties required of them. It frequently happened that they would go for weeks and even months to enjoy their old habits in the woods. These absences

were generally with leave, but sometimes without it: so long however as they had done nothing wrong, they knew that they would be well received whenever they chose to return. It was owing to this understanding between us that I had maintained such complete influence over them on this journey. It would have been absurd to suppose that they could have been induced to make themselves useful upon any other principle; for although they were in many respects to be managed like children, still they were on one point very different from them, inasmuch as they could make themselves independent whenever they pleased by returning to their old habits. Any thing like involuntary restraint would have driven them away at once. The mildness of the climate, the great facilities of obtaining food in every part of the forest, the attractive freedom and pleasures of a hunter's life, were circumstances which rendered it extremely difficult to attach them permanently to any one spot.

No person perhaps ever had so favourable an opportunity as myself for making experiments upon them, or of accurately learning their real characters. The effects of my exertions have however been strangely misrepresented in the two extremes by people who knew little of the matter. It was asserted by some that I should succeed in *completely* civilizing the natives. I never said or even thought so after the first month of my residence amongst them; for although the situation in which I was placed was one of the most favourable for the purpose that had occurred in the colony, still it was not that which would have enabled me or any other man to have performed such a miracle. I know it has also been said that the blacks laboured at Port Stephens the same as white men,

and that they were regular in their attendance, &c. &c. This was not correct. It is true that I generally had a considerable number employed, and could get any work done by them which I required ; but they were not always the same people. Several hundreds were in the habit of visiting us at different periods, and as I placed no restraint upon any of them, there were always enough who were willing, as a temporary change and a little novelty, to supply the places of those who had become tired of labour; and by *this* means our native parties were kept up. To maintain a friendly intercourse with them—to humanize them, as it were; to do them all the kindness in my power in return for our interference with their country; and to receive an equivalent in their labour for the food which was given to them, were all I aimed at: and the result fully equalled my expectations.

The two extreme assertions therefore, first, that I had *civilized* them; and next, that I had deceived the British public in the accounts which I had sent home, (to my *friends* only,) are equally incorrect. These assertions were both circulated, I believe, by the same interested party, for the purpose, in the *first* instance, of giving an eclat to the Company in whose service I was engaged; and in the second instance, to cast imputations upon an individual whose sense of duty was at length opposed to certain private interests.

An honest statement of what I had experienced was all that I ever sent to my friends; which statement being placed in a former part of this book, just as it was transmitted home, my readers will form their own judgment of its contents.

In the course of conversation with the natives on the

evening I have already alluded to, I endeavoured to learn something more of "Coen," their devil, or evil spirit of the woods. I still thought that as they had an evil spirit, they might perhaps have an idea of a benevolent one: and although I had before been told by them that they had not, yet I hoped now that our journeying had made us more thoroughly acquainted with each other, that I might on making a fresh trial, elicit something more from them than I had hitherto been able to learn.

I observed to Bungaree therefore, that coen, or debble debble, was a bad fellow I believed. "Murry bad pellow, massa," he answered, "that crammer black pellow in bush sometimes." "Well," I said, "what does he do with him then?" "Carry it away in bush," was his answer. "What does he do with him when he gets him into the bush?" I asked. "Dat murry bad pellow, massa," he said, "dat go all about. Black pellow nebber come back again; debble debble make him boy," (die). "What does he make him die for?" I said. "Bael me know, massa," he answered. I then asked him if he had ever seen him; he said, "no; but plenty black pellow have tee him." "When did they see him?" I said. "Good while ago," he replied. "When he makes black fellow die," I said, "what becomes of him afterwards?" "Go away Englat," (England,) he answered, "den come back white pellow." This idea is so strongly impressed upon their minds, that when they discover any likeness between a white man and any one of their deceased friends, they exclaim immediately, "Dat black pellow good while ago jump up white pellow, den come back again." I endeavoured by every means in my power to ascertain whether they had any notion of the influence or power that sent

these deceased friends to England and brought them back so transformed, but they could tell me no more than I have related. I observed to them that as debble debble was a bad fellow, and came in the dark, there was also a Good Being, that prevented him from coming too often, and from hurting black fellow too much. They said there was only one devil, and he was a bad one. I observed that there were two spirits, and that one was a good one, and kept the bad one from taking away all black fellows who were kind to their gins and piccaninnies, and to their fathers and mothers, as well as to every one else. They answered, "No, massa, no! nossing (nothing) at all about it—nossing at all about it," meaning that there was no such being. I still said that there was such a being, and they all again replied that they knew nothing about him. I then told them that white people knew there was such a being, in the woods and every where else, that protected *them* against being carried away by the bad one when they were *good* fellows; and that I was sure he would do the same to all good black fellows. "Dat belonging to white pellow, massa," they said, "bael, dat belong to black pellow." "Yes, yes," I said, "he belongs to black fellow too; they are all the same as white fellows to him." "Where dat pellow come from, massa?" said Bungaree. "Why he lives all about, every where—every where," I said, "and after you die he will be kind to you when you jump up again, suppose you are murry good fellow." "Viddy will, vidy will, massa—all te same likit white pellow, massa?" "Yes," I said, "all the same."

Bungaree had been a good deal at Newcastle, and observed that Mr. Threlkeld (the missionary in that

neighbourhood) had told the blacks there the same thing, and that they had told him so ; but it did not appear that it had made the least impression upon him, nor was it likely it should, surrounded as he was by a population whose practices every day and almost every hour were in opposition to precepts. Mr. Threlkeld had the character of being a sensible, zealous, and very amiable man ; but he could not perform impossibilities. He was in one of the most unfavourable situations that could have been selected for the accomplishment of the objects he had in view. This however was not his fault ; nor do I presume to attach blame to any one for it. It arose, I think, from a general misunderstanding as to the situation and means that ought to be chosen for doing any permanent good to the natives of Australia. I think also that sufficient attention has not been paid, or knowledge acquired, as to their characters, and various other circumstances connected with them in their *original* state, *before* they became *promiscuously* connected with European society, and in which original state only, can any thing be done for them.

Finding my former impressions as to their having no idea whatever of a God more fully confirmed ; and finding that I could not make them comprehend the existence of the Supreme Being, I gave up the conversation ; determined, however, to seek some other opportunity of renewing the subject, perhaps under more favourable circumstances.

The whole party soon retired to rest, and when I supposed they were all asleep, I took a survey of my black and white establishment. On one side of the fire lay the natives, all huddled together, without having the slightest

covering over them, having, according to custom, the greatest part of a kangaroo carcase between themselves and the fire, ready for a fresh meal whenever they should awake: on the other side were the cook and his two assistants, rolled up in their blankets. The night was clear and delightfully serene. On the hills on our right I could distinctly hear the wild and dismal howl of the native dogs, and near to me the voice of the cuckoo, whose tone is louder and more harsh than that of the English cuckoo, and who in Australia calls, or rather halloos, in the night at all periods of the year.

As I thought my black friends had had enough kangaroo, and could wait till the morning, I determined to play them a trick, by hiding their ready-dressed food in the long grass at a short distance from the fire. Their sleep is always sound, and it is no easy matter to arouse them from it at any time, especially after a feast like that in which they had recently indulged, and I therefore found no difficulty in taking their meat.

During the summer and in dry weather, neither the natives nor the white servants have any desire to sleep under cover; the climate being so mild and salubrious, that with persons in good health no injury whatever arises from exposure to the night air: although the dew is very heavy, I never knew any of my attendants take cold from the practice. I have more than once, from accidental circumstances, been obliged to sleep before a fire in the forest without either covering or food. After a sound sleep, which fatigue always insured me, I have felt chilled in the morning when the fire had forsaken me, but no other inconvenience resulted from it. This has often made me feel, that were the *soil* of Australia equal to the

climate, there could scarcely be found a country in the world to vie with it as a residence for man.

Nov. 14th.—We awoke in the morning as usual under the cheering influence of a bright sun ; and as soon as my black valet, Wool Bill, made his appearance with a pannican of water, I asked him what they had done with all the kangaroo at the fire last night. He answered, in a sulky tone, “Bush dingo been patter when black pellow sleep.” “But he did not eat the bones too?” I said. “Bael me know,” he replied, “dat been carry him away I bleve.” “Debble debble, I think,” said I. “No, no, bael dat,” he said, “pose dat come dat take it black pellow bael dat likit kangaroo.” “What does he live upon then?” I said. He hesitated for a short time, when I repeated the question. I saw he was still puzzled for an answer, and on his observing me smile, he drawled out, half laughing and half angry, “Gar yar-a-a what for piola (talk to) me dat.” I laughed heartily, and so did Bill, and as I saw he could not explain the question, I dropped the subject.

On making my appearance at the fire, I saw them all busy roasting their breakfast, which consisted of two haunches of kangaroo ; and in my way to the river as usual with Wool Bill, I took him so as to bring him upon the kangaroo I had hid in the grass : as soon as he saw it he called out, “Massa ! massa ! kangaroo !” “Come along,” I said. “Yes, kangaroo, massa ! kangaroo ! top bit ! top bit !” and he immediately called “coo-oo-oo,” to the natives at the fire. They were soon altogether at the spot ; their countenances showed that they were not pleased, and a good deal of chatter took place between them in their own language. I was prepared for the

result, and asked them very gravely how it came there; when one of them replied, in a melancholy tone, "Debble debble, I bleve." "No, no," I said, "Wool Bill told me just now that debble debble was not fond of kangaroo;" upon which Bungaree answered, "Bael dat look out kangaroo last night, massa—dat been look out black pellow." "Why did he not take black fellow then?" I said, "and why did he take kangaroo, which you say he never eats?" No answer was given me, and they all looked exceedingly sad and alarmed. "And do you," I said, "really believe that debble debble brought it here?" "Yes," answered one of them, "dat been take it." I told them I was sure he did not take it, nor had he been looking out for black fellow last night: for that he would never hurt them while they were good, and they had been "murry budgerees" fellows ever since they had left Port Stephens. They still hung their heads, not believing one word of my doctrine.

The fear of this evil spirit, and their distance from home, seemed to have struck them with a panic which no arguments could overcome: at length I said, "go patter breakfast; it was *I* that brought the kangaroo here last night when you were asleep; debble debble has no business here, you don't belong to him; you are too budgerees for him, as I told you. Another coen, much better than he, takes care of you when you are budgerees." "What for," said Wickie, "you been make it gammon last night massa, when black pellow nangry?" (sleep.) "Because black fellows are very stupid," I said, "and wo'nt believe what I tell them about debble debble; but when they do believe it, I will not play gammon with them again." They walked off in pretty good humour, but they would

not take the kangaroo with them. As I returned from the river with Wool Bill we came to it again, when I said to him, "Why don't you take the kangaroo, Bill?" He said nothing, but stared vacantly about. "Come, come," said I, "take it, murry stupid fellow; I brought it here last night when you were asleep. Only a little fun, you know; only a little fun belonging to me." He at length took it up, and walked on with a sulky air till he got to the fire, when he threw it down in a contemptuous manner, and seated himself on the ground in a sullen and uncomfortable mood. I then began to banter them, and went on till I fairly laughed them out of their fears and suspicions, and succeeded in persuading them to eat the hitherto supposed contaminated flesh. It was not from the fear of disobliging me that they were at length induced to eat it; had this been the case, they would not have done it cheerfully as they did. My object was to give them more just notions, by showing them the folly of their former ones; and when their fears have been operated upon, it was only by a mixture of argument and raillery that there was any chance of success against such strongly imbibed prejudices as they entertained. Whenever I fancied I had succeeded in letting in the smallest ray of light upon their minds, I of course felt gratified: but it was a pleasure not unmixed with pain, because I foresaw that on their return to the mixed society, and the numerous temptations of Port Stephens, they would soon lose the simplicity of character which now made them so interesting, and that my power of doing them any further good would be diminished in proportion. I now saw them a harmless, a cheerful, and an innocent race of beings, and susceptible of improvement; but who would

soon be debased and ultimately destroyed by those to whom they looked up as beings of a superior order. These reflections, however, did not deter me from doing for them every thing of which I was capable; it was an experiment worthy of trial, and as I was surrounded by greater numbers of them in their original state, and with more ample means and opportunities than any other person in that colony had before possessed, I considered it a paramount duty to improve as well as protect them by every means in my power.

Having finished our breakfast in our usual gipsy style, I dispatched the four blacks and one white man to bring up the horses, while the other two white men and Wool Bill remained to pack up and make ready for our journey. The horses were always either tethered by a rope to a tree, or *hobbled* within sight of our encampment whenever the grass suited, so that it did not take long to put us in marching order. I allowed the natives now to arrange themselves as they pleased on the march, except as to the perambulator, which was wheeled in turn by them.

We had not proceeded more than half a mile from our camp when we met with a thick, impenetrable bush on our left, and were driven, as we had been the preceding day, up the side of a stony range on our right. Our path was intersected by deep gullies and thick vines, which rendered it impracticable; and we therefore descended, in order to make a second attempt to get through the bush below, but in this we did not succeed. We were then forced to ascend the range again, and proceeded higher up, almost to the summit, (about five hundred feet above the river,) in order to avoid the obstructions we had before met with. We halted to rest our pack-horses, when I

descended on foot, accompanied by Wool Bill with his musket, for the purpose of examining the opposite side of the river, which we crossed with some difficulty. We came out upon a small rich flat, beyond which the hills were of moderate elevation, lightly timbered, and grassy. In the centre of this flat was a small lagoon, or pool, with abundance of water-lilies spread over its surface. My companion's quick eye soon discovered the movements of fish in it; and he was rivetted to the spot in the hope, by watching, to catch one as it advanced to the edge of the pool. No persuasion of mine could move him forward: nothing less, I saw, than a positive order would ensure his further attendance then; so I left him to enjoy himself while I went on. In about a quarter of an hour I returned and found him on the spot where I had left him, watching as a terrier would a rat. I at length told him we must go, when he said, "Top bit, massa, bogy," (bathe;) and he threw himself into the water, where he enjoyed himself as long as I could stay. He was troubled with no clothes to take off or put on; nor did he require a towel to rub himself, the sun (which in Australia renders all these appendages unnecessary incumbrances to the aborigines) had dried him before we regained our party. When we had done so, we resumed our journey on the range; but it soon became too precipitous and rocky to proceed any further without endangering our pack-horses, which were too heavily laden to admit of any further hazard. Hoping to find the country more accessible lower down, we descended obliquely in the line of our journey, till we arrived at the foot of the range; but the loose and broken rocks that lay scattered every where on the surface, and the impenetrable vines

that sprung from amongst them, and overhung the high banks of the river, rendered it impossible to proceed; and we had the greatest difficulty to move in any other direction. I now determined to cross the river, if possible, and sent two natives to find a proper place for that purpose. I depended always upon their skill and judgment in such cases: they would proceed through or over any difficulties; and when the brush or vines were too thick to enable them to look forward, they would get into the river and go on till they found what they desired. One would then stop at the place and remove obstructions with his tomahawk, while the other returned "to look out road for corse," (horse.) If the distance was considerable, as in the present case, they would keep up a communication with each other by cooing; that is, a loud, shrill and lengthened call of coo-oo-oo. Our natives, upon this occasion, had some difficulty in finding a resting-place; but they at length succeeded, as I have described, and ultimately took us to it with much difficulty.

When we crossed the river, we found ourselves in a country without any obstructions, and proceeded over several low hills, covered with the most luxuriant grass. The ranges on our left, similar to those on the other side of the river, were at no great distance from us; and as we seemed to be enclosed by ranges of high hills on all sides, it was pretty evident that we were fast approaching the source of the river. In no instance did we see any hill or mountain that was not clothed with wood to its summit; and in all places the surface was covered with grass, in a greater or less degree, according to the quality of the soil, excepting those patches of brush or vine soil which were all composed of rich black vegetable mould,

and heavily timbered with tall umbrageous trees. In every other instance a heavily-timbered country had invariably a poor soil, as I had been led to expect by the information previously obtained, and the observations I had made at other parts of the grant. There were, however, here and there low grounds, upon which the water in most seasons stagnated, and consequently produced a heavy growth of timber, but which if drained and properly cultivated would, from the very considerable deposit of vegetable mould, have proved valuable land. From the hills before mentioned we descended into a small flat, and soon met the ranges on our left, which obliged us, as on the other side, to recross the river. As this would occasion some little delay, and the hills facing us on the other side appearing rather low and inviting, I hastily crossed the river alone and ascended the hills, casting my eye back now and then in the direction I had come. I felt secure that I should not miss my party, and therefore ventured on a little further, winding round several hills at a brisk trot. At length I determined to return, not having the least doubt that I could go directly back to the spot from whence I had come. I soon however found myself mistaken, for I rode twice the distance I had come, and could neither see nor hear the party, nor make them hear me. My sensation at that moment I shall not readily forget. To be starved to death in the bush was one of the horrible ideas that presented itself; another was the chance of being murdered by the natives. A few minutes' reflection helped to put these gloomy thoughts to flight. I knew I could reach some point of the river by following down the course of the waters; and that I could thus, perhaps, reach home

in three days, or less, by following the river; and that if I saw any hostile natives, I had my pistols and my horse's heels for my protection. I rode on as fast as I could by a water-course; this fortunately intersected the line of our intended route, and I met the party in a short time after the commencement of my alarm. The pleasure of thus seeing my friends so soon after I had nearly abandoned all hopes of meeting them, amply compensated for the anxiety I had experienced. I determined however never to stray from them again, unattended by one of my faithful natives, who now appeared of more value than ever in my eyes. My party had not felt any uneasiness about me, as they supposed I had been following up the river before them.

We now proceeded forward as near the river as we could: as we approached its source the valley gradually became more narrow and the hills more lofty, closing every now and then so near to the stream as to force us several times across it and round the hills, where we met the river again. At length we suddenly found ourselves in a pretty valley, which intersected that which we had been following up. Here we encamped near several pools of water, in a line down the valley. In England this place would have afforded a running brook; but the dryness of the climate in Australia seldom, except in wet seasons, admits of more than a succession of small pools or ponds from the source to the river into which they fall.

Although the water in these places seems to have no motion, it is generally very good; but before we ventured to encamp by the side of any of the pools, it was always tasted and reported upon by the natives, whose judgment in this respect was unerring. I never found any pool in

a desert of this sort whose waters were unfit to drink from any cause but that of brackishness ; and this never occurred except after long droughts, when it was difficult to find water in any places excepting in the rivers or their main branches, which receive the insensibly collected waters from the hills around them. In dry seasons water is always found more pure and abundant in scrubby and poor districts than in the richer tracts of country ; and in these otherwise barren spots, every species of flowering shrub, as well as the most beautiful flowrets, grow in abundance.

The little valley in which I determined to pitch my tent for the night, afforded plenty of grass and water for our horses. The scenery at the confines was very beautiful, and varied between rocky mountains on the one side and grassy slopes and hills on the other. Abundance of parrots of the most beautiful plumage, and white cockatoos were screeching around us: the pools showed by the beaten paths that led to them, and the drinking places on their margins, that the kangaroos abounded also. We had travelled during this day through a very difficult country, and as no kangaroo sport could be afforded to our natives under such circumstances, they had become rather uneasy about their dinners. I therefore gave them full liberty to go out with their guns in search of game, while dinner was preparing ; during which time Wickie and I started in an opposite direction on horseback, to examine the country in the neighbourhood of the encampment.

We ascended a range towards the south, from which we could discover an opening over our encampment towards the north, bounded on the east and west by very

high ranges, which were wooded to their summits. The vale appeared to be five or six miles wide, and extended northward as far as we could see. I immediately determined to proceed in this direction on the morrow. I also soon discovered in the opposite direction a considerable fall of country; the ridge upon which we stood appearing to divide the waters on each side of us. We therefore descended and followed down till we came to a valley which gradually opened as we proceeded. The water-course through this valley was deep and dry, and there were strong indications that the country downwards was more open and fertile than usual. The hills were low and undulating, the soil exceedingly rich, and covered with the most luxuriant grass, whilst the timber stood (as it uniformly does on such soils) as if planted by the hand of man to render still more picturesque the gently waving country before us. The line of the water-course down the vale was marked by a variety of beautiful shrubs growing by its side, of a darker green than the foliage and herbage around it, as well as by the deeper hue of the ivy-like vines which strongly mark the course of every river and stream, and which clearly describe its windings from an eminence down the vale, as far as the eye can reach.

At the foot of one of these hills, and at the margin of the brook, we met with a native encampment, consisting of eight or ten "gunyers." This is the native term for small huts, which are supported by three forked sticks (about three feet long) brought together at the tops in a triangular form: the two sides towards the wind are covered by long sheets of bark, the third is always left open. In winter each family has its own fire in front of

the hut. When the wind shifts, the gunyer is shifted also, and this operation takes them only about ten minutes to perform; they seldom, however, stay more than a few days at these places, frequently not more than one night. In dry summer weather they do not feel it necessary to provide themselves with any shelter at all. If the gunyers should be found standing on their return during summer, it is well; but if they have fallen down the natives will not take the trouble to rebuild them. Those which we saw had been built a considerable time, but the freshness of the embers, the bones of the kangaroos, and the pieces of recently broken spears which lay scattered about, convinced us that they must have been inhabited only a few days before. We found a bundle of spears also standing against a tree, which was a strong indication that the tribe intended soon to return, and I had an idea of the possibility of our meeting with them on our way down the valley. I was not singular as to the latter notion, for my companion, who first saw the gunyers, called out to me in a loud sharp tone: "Waw! waw! (halloo) massa! come back; moru (go) camp directly; bush black pellow murry near." I had no wish, any more than himself, to come into contact with a strange tribe in so unprotected a state as we then were, although I had the greatest desire to see a little more of the country before us. I therefore encouraged him, as well as I could, to go on; but he stood rivetted to the spot, casting his eyes in every direction, and listening anxiously for the sound of human voices. At this moment we heard the report of a gun on the right of us. "Alah! Wool Bill! kangaroo!" he exclaimed with the quickness of lightning, and with a look in the highest degree animating. Wish-

ing to leave him as much as possible to his own feelings, that I might the better observe his motions, and above all, the expression of his countenance, I remained quietly looking at him. As soon as the surprise and emotion occasioned by the sound of the gun had in some degree subsided, he turned to the gunyers with a very altered look, and urged me to return. I appeared to take no notice of his entreaties, but endeavoured to entice him on by calling his attention to the form of the huts and the shape of the spears, and asked him if they were as good as those of the natives at Port Stephens. He examined several of them, and then threw them down with a contemptuous sneer, saying: "No good, massa. Bael dat know how to make it pear. Black pellow tit down here murry stupid;" and then turning his eyes towards our camp, he said: "Come, massa! moru camp. Wool Bill been choot him kangaroo; by and bye roast him." We proceeded, however, further down the country, which was still of the same description, and after riding about a mile we turned our horses' heads towards home, and rode at full gallop back to the gunyers, when my companion pulled up and was about to dismount. I found that he was going to take the spears away with him, when I informed him that he must not do so. "What for no take it, massa?" he answered. "Because they are not your's," I replied; "they belong to other black fellows." "What, bush black?" he said: "bush black pellow crammer (steal) always." "Yes," I said, "and so do you, it seems; but it is very wrong. You know I like *all* black fellows when they are honest and good. I would not allow bush black to crammer from you, and you must not crammer from them." "Bael you been see bush black, massa; what

for you like him?" he answered. "I never like any body," I said, "who steals; and I shall not like you if you steal those spears; so come along and patter kangaroo, and leave the spears where they are." He made no difficulty in giving them up, and as we went on I asked him what he had intended to do with the spears, if he had taken them. "Pose take him," he said, "den chow him black pellow when go camp. Black pellow plenty laugh when see him. Murry stupid bush black, bael dat know how to make it pear."

We soon arrived at our camp, where we found a blazing fire and a large kangaroo, which had been brought in and skinned by Jemmy Bungaree, who had returned before any of his companions. In a few minutes M'Quarie made his appearance from between the hills with another very large one on his shoulders. When he approached the fire he threw it down in a careless manner, delivered his gun to the cook, and then lighted his pipe and squatted down near the tent, apparently tired by his sport. Next came Wool Bill without any game, walking slowly and sulkily on, like many other unsuccessful sportsmen, after a hard day's work. He immediately took his gun to the cook without saying a word, nor did he appear as if he wished to have any questions asked him. "Where is your kangaroo, Bill?" I said. He replied in a low, sullen tone, "Musquito." This was a term which was in use amongst them when their guns missed fire, or when they missed their game, which was not very often the case; but when they did they were chagrined beyond measure. Bill then seated himself by the fire and took his pipe in silence, while Bungaree, who was cutting up his kangaroo, was chattering and boasting in broken English of

the superiority of his skill. Maty Bill also returned without game, not having seen a kangaroo.

The entrails and heads of those they brought in were, as usual, soon roasted and divided, and the conversation then turned upon the gunyers which Wickie and I had seen. The relation appeared to make a great impression upon the whole party, and Bungaree wished to know from me how many nangry (nights, or rather sleeps) would pass before we returned home. Wickie had seen from the Range, and so had I, that we could return home by a much nearer and more easy line than that by which we had come; and that the vale before us on the north would take us to a great distance from Port Stephens, without any apparent obstructions. None of the natives had any desire to proceed further. The fear which always operates upon them in a strange or remote district, could not be got rid of; added to which, there was evidently a longing to return home. They said, "Home murry long way, massa; want to see all black pellow now; pose go back, den come again by and bye; what for you moru all about? Black pellow no like him; Port Tebid more better." I endeavoured to allay their fears as well as I could, and informed them that I could not return yet, and that I was sure they would not leave me for the bush blacks to spear and eat me. No reply was made to this, and we all proceeded to partake of the dinner which the sportsmen had so amply provided.

The journey during this day had not been extended above nine miles; but the obstructions which we had met in following up the river, rendered it by far the hardest day's work which we had yet experienced. The blacks fell asleep almost immediately after they had taken their

favourite meal of kangaroo; and as they thus forgot their alarm of the wild natives, and their dislike of the journey onwards, I was glad to allow them to remain in quiet.

As the evening shut in, the dismal howlings of the native dogs were unusually loud and frequent on the hills opposite to us. These animals subsist in the woods almost entirely upon the kangaroos, and hunt them by scent, as an English spaniel would a hare. They never bark in hunting, or, indeed, upon any other occasion; and if we may judge from their very lean and mangy appearance, they either procure a very slender subsistence, or are much subject to disease. I apprehend the latter to be the case. The natives are exceedingly attached to dogs of any kind: I never saw a tribe without some of them. In the neighbourhood of almost every settlement, the breed accompanying the natives has become intermixed with the European dogs. The offspring partakes more of the nature of the foreigners in their barking and domestic habits, but less so in their shape and appearance. The native dog is drawn up in his flanks like a greyhound or a small wolf, and bears a greater resemblance in shape to the latter animal than to any other that I am acquainted with. The natives frequently take the wild dogs when they are puppies and domesticate them: they become in this way as much attached as the common European dog, but they never possess the same open countenance and manner, being shy and sneaking, and instead of barking at a stranger, they will lower their tails, creep behind their masters, and look between his legs. Neither will they fight when attacked by other dogs, otherwise than by throwing themselves on the ground, and snapping at their opponents.

When a wild dog starts from his lair in sight of the common kangaroo dogs, they will run at him, and over him, and give him a shake or two; but if it is intended to kill him, you must assist the kangaroo dogs, or he will be let off without much damage. There are dogs, no doubt, that would accomplish it, but I never met with one of them. The native dogs are of various colours, red, black, red and white, black and white, and fawn. They are great enemies to sheep, which they kill whenever they can; most frequently at night, when in the fold. This is the only serious inconvenience the settlers experience from them: it is, however, an expensive one, because it obliges them to employ watchmen at the folds all night; and even then, in cold, wet weather, I have known the dogs enter the fold in spite of both of them. The sheep, upon such an occasion, make a general rush from the dogs: the hurdles are frequently thrown down, and the flock is dispersed. The dog then attacks them as a common dog would do, by biting them behind the ear, and sucking the blood; but if he meets with only one, and is not disturbed, he devours the flesh also.

These dogs have been known to attack very young and weak calves, and foals also, but this is not of very common occurrence. The inhabitants of Australia are fortunate in having no worse enemies of prey than the native dog: he is the largest animal of that nature which has hitherto been found to exist in that portion of the globe; and no instance has occurred, that I know of, of his having attempted to make any attack upon a human being. The natives consider them as perfectly harmless. I never heard one of them allude to them as being dangerous either to themselves or their children.

And now back to our bivouac. The wild dogs appeared more uneasy and noisy from the hills than usual, and were answered by the continual barkings of our dogs at the fire. In the middle of the night I was suddenly awoke by a violent noise and shaking of my tent, as if some persons were pulling it down. I soon discovered that the native dogs, or dingo, as the natives call them, had made a charge in the face of our dogs, with the view of carrying off the remains of kangaroo which the blacks had left about the fire. They approached so near, as to drive our big curs back upon the cords of my tent, over which they several times rolled; but they did not carry away any part of the meat which had attracted them. During all this, the natives slept soundly, as they usually do, and especially after a full meal, when nothing appears to disturb them but the want of fire, which, about two or three o'clock in the morning, generally becomes low, when the cold air chills them, and forces them up to renew it. Many a time have I been awoke by the breaking of sticks and the blowing of embers, when the heat has been too much diminished. Upon these occasions too it is, that they again fall to on the kangaroo which happens to be placed near them.

Nov. 15th.—I had some trouble this morning in persuading my native friends to proceed any further on the journey. They had never before been so far, and so long from home. The novelty of our proceedings having ceased, and their fears having been so much excited by the appearance of the bush blacks, their disinclination to proceed was too strong to be overcome by any thing which I could say. In the end, I observed they were at liberty to leave me whenever they pleased; that I should

go on without them if they did; but that, of course, they would get no clothes when they returned, nor could they be considered as belonging to me afterwards. On the contrary, they would become bush blacks again; and as I went on I should find the bush blacks, to whom I could give blankets, &c. and take them home to Port Stephens. During all this time we were packing up and loading our horses for the journey, and they were reluctantly assisting us. The only reply they made to me was, "How many nangry in bush?" and this was often repeated in a low and desponding tone. On asking Wool Bill whether *he* intended to leave me too, he looked at his companions, as if to ascertain what they intended to do, before he answered, and then he said, "Bael me know." "Very well," I answered, "you can go home, you know. I shall find a bush black by and bye: he will take care of my portmanteau, and bring me 'bardo' (water) when I want; and when he gets to Port Stephens, he will clean all the knives and forks, and sit down always with the cook." No reply was made to all this: the packing and loading still went on; but when it was nearly concluded, I was much pleased to observe Wool Bill take up the shot-belt, and place it round his neck as usual. He next took his rifle, and his companions also resumed their various stations, upon which I remarked, as cheerfully as I could, "Black fellows belonging to me all good fellows, only a little gammon sometimes;" and began to sing, "we all moru together," &c. in which they joined heartily. They never liked to be accused of gammon, and they denied that they had shown any disposition to it. I retorted upon them, by observing that they had wished to return home, and to

leave me to go alone. "No, sir! no!" said Wickie: "black pellow murry tired, you know. Bael dat like him bush blacks. Pose massa like it, you know, den black pellow go always." I agreed to this to the fullest extent, and told them that I was now sure they would never leave me, and that by and bye we should all go back together, and we then sung, "We'll all go back together," &c.

I represented to them the manner in which their companions, on their return, would gather round them, and ask them for all the news, and how much they would have to tell. They appeared to understand this feeling perfectly, and I have no doubt they entered into it thoroughly, for they are the greatest of gossips and news-mongers.

We soon crossed the river which we had been following up for the last three days, and proceeded on in search of the vale which we had the day before seen from the range. The country consisted here of moderately elevated hills, and narrow vallies, over which we passed without difficulty. They were sometimes lightly, and sometimes rather heavily timbered, but covered everywhere with grass fit either for sheep or cattle. This broken country continued for several miles, and appeared to be the head of the vale which we had seen at a distance. The ranges which ran from south to north on both sides, were high and rather precipitous, and were clothed with wood, as well as grass, to their summits. The broken country over which we had proceeded for about four miles, became now rather less fertile and interesting, and the scenery more gloomy and confined, in consequence of the increased quantity and size of the

timber. We crossed several very deep and wide streams, or rather channels, which proved the existence of heavy and rapid torrents of water at certain seasons. They were from ten to fifteen yards wide, and were now in the same state in which they are generally found during summer—perfectly dry perhaps for intervals of a quarter of a mile, then pools of still but pure water. The banks of most of them were steep, and frequently occasioned some difficulty to the horses in crossing them: at other places they were nearly flat, and overgrown by vines, intermixed with small trees, resembling, both in size and bark, the sapling ash, having, like the vines, a dark green foliage, and were growing under very large and lofty spreading trees, whose leaves resembled those of a laurel both in size and colour. These places sometimes extended half a mile, and were frequently a hundred yards or more in width, alternating with the steep banks on both sides; the high and low bank being almost invariably opposite on each side of the channel, so that the passing through the thick vines was sometimes as troublesome to the pack-horses as the ascending of the high banks on the other side. Small rich alluvial flats or meadows, lightly timbered, invariably attended these streams on the exterior of the brushes, which form a pleasing and interesting feature of the country. These low jungles or brushes are inhabited by a small bird, which is constantly making a noise resembling the filing of a saw heard at a distance. We were always warned by them of the existence of deep channels, long before we saw them: at first, they were extremely disagreeable to my ear; but as they became associated with pleasant scenery, rich soil, and good water, the opposite sensations were created.

Soon after we had crossed one of these channels, one of the natives called out, "Massa, top bit." He bent his head in a listening posture, as if he had heard something unusual on the right of him; and in a moment he said, in a state of great excitement, "You hear?" "Hear what?" said I. "Bush black," he replied: "plenty hunt him kangaroo." The whole party upon this halted to listen, when we very faintly distinguished the hunting shout of the natives, though at a considerable distance from us. Our black friends knew, by their tones, that they were driving the kangaroos within a certain space before them. When circumstances admit of it, I have seen them take their game in this manner in large quantities. They form themselves in a line, and move forward, shouting and driving the kangaroos before them: the two extremes of the line are gradually drawn in, until the kangaroos find themselves enclosed in a nook, with the bend of a river, or some other obstruction, in front of them. The natives then closing upon them, the slaughter commences, and the greater part, if not the whole of their game, is secured. The animals have no security in taking to the river, for the hunters pursue them there also, and knock them on the head with their waddies.

Our natives were as usual much alarmed at the idea of these wild blacks being so near them, and they became very sad and silent, travelling on with downcast countenances. They had been repeatedly convinced that I was not to be deterred by their fears from proceeding, and they now seemed to give up all further remonstrance in despair. We soon ascended a small rise, on the top of which we found an encampment belonging to the natives whom we had just heard. It appeared to have been abandoned within a day or two. The gunyers were exactly the same

as those which our natives were in the habit of constructing. Quantities of bones, broken spears, several drinking vessels formed out of the excrescences of trees, and a corbille (a shield) lay scattered about. Our natives also picked up something that resembled a shield, only longer and of a more circular form: it was made out of a piece of bark from a tree called iron-bark, (nearly as hard when dry as an English elm-board,) and as smoothly worked up as if it had been done by a carpenter's plane. The ground was made perfectly white by pipe-clay, and it was curiously chalked on its surface by red ochre. Not having seen any thing like it before, I had no idea what it was intended for; but our natives informed me that it was fixed upon a pole by the bush blacks, and set up at their corrobories. I could not learn that there was any superstition attached to it; it appearing only to be used as a common centre to dance round.

It was exceedingly curious to see how minutely my black friends examined every thing about this encampment, and to observe their disposition to throw ridicule upon what they saw, as if nothing was or could be so well done as by their own people; but let us not condemn them for this, while so many of their betters in this enlightened quarter of the globe exhibit a similar and a less pardonable weakness. The distinctions however, or inferiority of these goods and chattels, (if there were any,) were lost to me; for I could discover no difference between them and those of our own tribes, except as to the piece of embellished bark which I have before described.

I told our natives I was very much pleased with this "black camp," as they called it, and that I thought the bush blacks were fine fellows. This observation I knew

would not please them, but my policy then was to excite a little jealousy. I had before told them that if they left me I would take home some bush blacks in their places; and I thought it had a more powerful effect in persuading them to proceed than any thing else. They replied, that bush blacks were good for nothing: that they would kill us all, &c. I dissented from this, and bantered them as long as I judged it prudent, and then told them that although bush blacks might be very good, still I liked Port Stephen black fellows very much indeed; and if they did as I told them, they would always sit down with me—always! always! They repeated the last word several times, when my friend Bill observed to me, in a very soft tone, “Bael always go in bush when massa go. Plenty more black pellowes belonging to Port Tebid: dey go next time.” To this I answered, that although they would *always* belong to me, they should only go in bush with me when they wished it. We perfectly understood each other, and but for the fear of meeting with strangers, they would all have proceeded on with good-humour. This fear however appeared to spoil every thing for the time, and kept me perpetually upon the watch to manage them, for if they had left me I could not have gone on.

Before I left the encampment, I placed a large piece of tobacco between the bark of a tree. On seeing me do this, Wickie said, “What for put bacca dere, massa?” I told him I had placed it there for the bush blacks when they returned. They were exceedingly anxious that it should not be left there, and exhibited an extreme degree of jealousy, assuring me that these blacks had no pipes to smoke with, and that bush blacks were always “murry stupid.” I then spoke of leaving a tomahawk, but they

objected still more decidedly to this, and seemed to think that none but themselves were entitled to any thing from me. I at length left the tobacco where I had first placed it, and we all moved on. A good deal of chatter ensued amongst them, and I observed that Wickie, who was then leading the dogs, stopped behind. I was perfectly assured that he intended to return and take the tobacco, but I appeared to take no notice of him. He resumed his station with me in a few minutes with a cheerful countenance. I soon perceived some sly looks passing amongst them, and that they were ripe for a laugh; and I therefore thrust my stick into his belt, (where they place every thing,) and pushed out the tobacco. I exclaimed, in a laughing tone, "Ah! you rogue! you have taken the tobacco belonging to bush black." Loud screams of laughter followed: the joke went off admirably; and as I was determined to make the most of it, and to create as much incident as possible, I immediately galloped back to the tree and placed the tobacco there again. I had no sooner resumed my place than the same trick was again attempted, but it did not succeed; although the failure by my detection occasioned another burst of laughter. The attempt was pretended to be repeated several times when they were at too great a distance, and when I knew their fears would not allow any one of them to leave the party; but as it served to make them merry, and as I gained an object by it, I entered into the fun with as much enjoyment as was felt by any one of them. In the midst of a forest and away from society, slight things become comparatively important: the fawning and playfulness even of dogs, or the occasional acknowledgments which the horses make of each

other, have all a tendency to excite cheerfulness. If this be in the slightest degree true, it may easily be imagined that these children of the woods—these untaught beings of our own species—must in such a situation create considerable interest in the breast of any man, and especially in those who reflect and reason upon the relative state of human beings in the world. As to myself, I felt an interest amounting to enthusiasm in these poor people. The natural workings of their minds, the manner in which they received intelligence, as well as the progress they made in applying it under the circumstances in which they were placed with me, were both gratifying and interesting in the highest degree. The mildness too of their dispositions, their docility of manners, and their jokes in due season, rendered them exceedingly pleasant companions in such a journey.

CHAPTER V.

CONTINUATION OF JOURNEY—DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY—NUMEROUS FLOCKS OF KANGAROOS—FISHING—BEAUTIFUL SCENERY—EFFECTS OF GLUTTONY ON NATIVES—DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY—FAITHFUL CONVICT SERVANT—TOMAHAWKS—POWER OF THE NATIVES TO SUSTAIN HUNGER—DISCOVERY OF ANOTHER RIVER—DETERMINATION TO RETURN HOME—JOY OF NATIVES ON THE OCCASION—A VEIN OF GOOD COAL DISCOVERED—SUCCESSFUL FISHING—AMPLE REPAST—TRACE THE COURSE OF THE RIVER—RETURN TOWARDS HOME—CONDUCT PURSUED WITH NATIVES—THE EFFECTS OF DISAPPOINTMENT ON ONE OF THEM—THUNDER-STORM—ARRIVAL AT PORT STEPHENS—GRATIFYING RECEPTION.

THE country for several miles after we left the native encampment was less fertile; the tall ugly gum-trees every where increasing in number and size in proportion to the poverty of the soil, now rendered the scene more gloomy: the country was less broken, and a species of weed spread itself over the surface of the ground. As we travelled on we frequently met flights of locusts, and sometimes the trees were covered with them. The noise of these insects is exceedingly disagreeable, and almost deafening to a stranger; it resembles the chirp of crickets: myriads of them are united, and the *ringing* which they make is frequently kept up during the whole of the day in every part of the forest and coasts, with short intervals,

all the summer. I never heard of any mischief being done by them in Australia.

As we proceeded we found a gradual fall of country until we descended into an extensive flat with very few trees upon it, and those were of an exceedingly large and tall description, called the white gum. The bark was white and smooth, with a green tinge, but like the trees generally in Australia, they were far from rendering the scenery picturesque. These, as well as most others in the forests, resemble the trees which have been reared in a wood in England, and are sometimes left when the great mass has been cleared away. They have tall smooth stems, forty or fifty feet high, and sometimes much higher, with tops which afford scarcely any shade.

We had not travelled long on this flat before we discovered, by the brush and low trees at a distance, the bendings of what I had no doubt was a considerable stream. As the day was fast closing, I viewed it with much pleasure, and so did my poor blacks, whose quick sight soon discovered a flock of kangaroos. "A wool-man! a wool-man!" was the cry. His size and height above the flock made him easily distinguishable: he was instantly singled out, the dogs were laid in and soon came up with him; and after a hard battle he was felled by a blow from one of the natives with a small branch of a tree, which he had picked up near the spot. Transports of joy and the most laughable exclamations succeeded, while the appearance of a plentiful dinner of their favourite food, a supply of good water, and the announcement that I should remain there to nangry, (sleep,) spread the most perfect content amongst them.

On approaching what we had believed to be a river, we

found a deep wide channel with reaches, consisting alternately of still pools of water and a small running stream, which made its way in a clear thin sheet over a pebbly bottom. This was a refreshing sight to us all, and sufficient of itself to cause our bivouacking on its banks, even though the day had not been so far advanced. We crossed the stream and unloaded our horses. The banks on both sides for a quarter of a mile consisted of some of the richest alluvial soil I ever saw : it was overgrown with grass in some places three feet high ; the soil was heaped up into high banks on both margins of the river, and sloped gradually from it into the flats, beyond which it was less fertile, producing both herbage and timber of a different description. This, as well as other appearances, showed the existence of extensive floods ; and exhibited a perfect specimen of the gradual formation of soils by the action of water at particular periods and situations, in contradistinction to those which are formed by decayed vegetables, or the decomposition of rocks on the spot.

I invited my friend Bill to accompany me on horseback as usual before dinner, and as the country was flat and open, and the game appeared abundant, I wished to have taken a brace of dogs with us, but they were all so tired by the heat of the weather and the course they had just run, that they could not be tempted to leave the cool shade of the long grass in which they still lay panting and stretched at full length. We therefore set off without them over the flat which we saw before us. We proceeded to a considerable distance without perceiving its termination : I had no doubt that it accompanied the stream down to its junction with some other outlet of greater importance. We had now kangaroos on all sides

of us. I never saw such numerous flocks before, nor was I able upon any former occasion to approach so near to them. The animation of my companion was extreme; he threw about his arms, twisted himself in all manner of positions, made loud and quick exclamations, and was about to jump from his horse several times to pursue them on foot and to throw his waddy after them. At last he began to mock them by imitating their grunting, and ending his freak each time with a screaming laugh.

Wishing to see as much of this interesting vale as I could, I rode to a small rise on the west side of it. I could discern from thence, to a considerable distance, the bendings of the stream, which was marked by a fringe of casurino and mimosa plants. These, when its banks are not overgrown by vines and timber, generally spring out of the dry edge of its gravelly bottom, or from hillocks of sandy soil immediately adjoining, and which form the foot of the alluvial banks above. The sun was just receding behind the western ranges, which on that side bounded this comparatively extensive plain. The beautiful effect of its departing rays, as reflected from the opposite hills and broken ranges in the distance, formed a magnificent picture, though I own it was with a feeling of melancholy that I gazed on its beautiful solitude. How often, thought I, has the glorious sun which now gilds the tops of those mountains, thus set in all its glowing splendour upon this sequestered vale unseen by human eyes, excepting those of the poor benighted beings who have been insensible to its beauty, and incapable, in their unassisted darkness, of tracing in its magnificence the hand of its great and bountiful Creator. While indulging in the train of thought into which my peculiar situation

had naturally led me, I was checked in my reverie by my black companion, who reminded me that "urokah (the sun) most gone." We therefore made the best of our way to the camp. In riding along we observed several gunyers which had not recently been used, and as we had no doubt that these grounds belonged to the tribe that we had heard in the morning, and which were now at a considerable distance from us, my sable friend expressed no alarm.

On our arrival at the camp we found every thing in readiness for us as usual. The deep pools in the river abounded with fine perch, and as I had neglected to take any fishing tackle with me, the white men had in my absence caught several with a bent pin baited with a grasshopper, which were soon fried in the fat from the bacon, and served up for dinner. They were rather larger than the English perch, but like them in every other respect. They were the first fresh-water fish which I had seen in the colony, and I was much gratified to find that they were so plentiful and so easily obtained. Quails and ducks were also abundant here; and if my time and thoughts had not been occupied about matters of much greater importance, I could have found amusement here for several days in coursing, shooting, and fishing. I placed these down however in my mind as sources of future enjoyment, which I fancied I was and had been fairly earning for myself; but those days of pleasure never came. I cannot, however, believe that the conduct which has interrupted this prospective happiness, and which so rudely and unjustly snatched from me the honest reward of my labours, will add much either to the enjoyment or the interests of those who, while they have done them-

selves no honour, have injured one whom they were bound to protect.*

Nothing remarkable occurred during this evening. No fears of the wild natives appeared to disturb the minds of my black friends, who enjoyed their pipes and the tea which followed; and as they were all sufficiently fatigued, they retired early to rest. I was, however, awake, and at the door of my tent long after the party were soundly sleeping around the fire. The stillness of the scene was only interrupted by the chirping of the grasshoppers, and the grazing of the horses upon the luxuriant herbage, at a short distance from the tent.

The fine extent of unoccupied meadow by which I was surrounded, and the many advantages with which nature had provided this district, were calculated, in so poor a country as Australia, to invite the attention even of a disinterested traveller; but under my peculiar circumstances it will naturally be supposed that I contemplated this vale with feelings of great pleasure, although mixed with some regret. I could not help contrasting its serenity and profound quietness, and its hitherto undisturbed herbage, which luxuriated on every side, with what I felt it would so soon become through my own instrumentality, when its untrodden surface would be trampled by the feet of grazing herds, and its tranquillity destroyed by the presence, and too probably by the noisy contentions of men. The next morning, which was, as usual, fine with a clear blue sky, was greeted with the gay whistlings of the magpies, several of them having perched themselves on the tops of the high trees near my tent, which was pitched

* See Narrative of my Treatment by the Committee in Sydney, and Directors in London. Published by Smith, Elder and Co., Cornhill.

upon the brink of a refreshing stream, on the banks of which stood our tethered horses, having satiated themselves during the night with the inexhaustible pasturage around them.

The blue tints of the morning, combining with the soft foliage of the apple-trees, which stood singly and beautifully scattered down the vale by the sides of the river, together with the hazy mist which still lingered on the mountains tops, inspired feelings not to be easily forgotten, perhaps never to be renewed. My black friends, however, were lounging about with heavy eyes and constant yawnings, true pictures of the sluggard, unmindful of all that surrounded them, save the water to which the fever of the last night's gluttony impelled them to have frequent recourse to slake their thirsts. When Wool Bill made his appearance, I observed to him: "What for patter so much kangaroo?" And I endeavoured to show him his own dull face by imitating him, and then by producing the looking-glass. He was too heavy to smile at my bantering, and walked off; when I afterwards went to the fire where he had quietly placed himself, he turned his back to me, quite unable to face a joke. Had the natives been left to themselves, they would have remained for a day or two alternately eating and sleeping; such being their usual habit at a kangaroo feast. I found it actually necessary to *drive* them to assist in watering the horses, the requests of the white men having no influence whatever upon them; and when they did go, it was with a lazy reluctance that sufficiently indicated the bodily indisposition which had been occasioned by the last night's repletion. "What a set of lazy beggars they are," said one of the white men to his companions.

“ Ah!” said another, “ one white man is worth a dozen of them.” This is just the language which is frequently held by ignorant and bigoted people, even of a different class and higher pretensions. They forget that man is more the creature of habit than any thing else, and that if they had been brought up with no greater advantages than these poor people, they also would have glutted themselves with kangaroo whenever they could procure it.

Until men will learn to distinguish between the force of habit and what they call the *nature of the people*, it is in vain to expect fair play for beings whom they imagine they have a right to speak of and to treat as brutes because they do not act like Europeans, and manifest an unwillingness to yield up a life of liberty in such a climate, and in the forest which supports them without labour and toil, quietly placing their necks in the yoke of servitude, at the bidding of men whose bodies differ from them only in colour. The natives will stay with the whites only so long as the novelty shall last, and their situation be rendered agreeable. Ought more than this to be expected?

Why does a boy submit to the confinement and discipline of a school, or a man to the toil of daily labour? Simply because he is compelled to do so.

Does any person believe that the convicts would remain under the restraints imposed upon them, if they could endure the food upon which the natives live, and could find protection in the woods?

Local situation and climate have more to do with the civilization of savage tribes than has generally been imagined. Moral instruction and the use of reason are not alone sufficient, and religion can of course have no

share in it till some progress has been made in the two former ; and even the application of these must depend upon a variety of circumstances too numerous to be here entered upon.

My attendant Bill accompanied me to the river, where he washed my feet as usual, and held the glass for me while I shaved myself: he performed his duties in perfect silence, and being quite aware of the cause of it, I did not trouble him with any remarks or jokes. He followed me up to the camp, where we found our pack-horses saddled and our breakfast waiting. As soon as it was over, and during the interval of packing and loading, Wickie and I rode up the river to examine the country towards its source, which I saw must be in the mountainous range on the West. We proceeded over some low hills or downs, which intersected the low lands at intervals as the river turned.

The vale, which was five or six miles wide, and which appeared to grow wider towards the north, contains, I have no doubt, a vast quantity of fine land, some of which could plainly be seen from the downs on which we were riding. We proceeded about three miles up the course of the stream, on the banks of which we found patches of some of the richest land imaginable. The low hills over which we were travelling were covered with herbage, varying in quality (as is always the case) according to the quantity and quality of the timber, which here alternated very much. In looking down upon the rich flats below, adjoining the stream, I was perpetually reminded of a thriving and rich apple-orchard. The resemblance of what are called apple-trees in Australia, to those of the same name at home, is so striking at a distance in these

situations, that the comparison could not be avoided, although the former bear no fruit, and do not even belong to the same species.

I was much delighted with my ride, and crossing the river, returned by its margin, where we put to flight several wild ducks. We saw here a greater number of parrots and small birds of different descriptions, than I had observed any where else, birds of any kind not being, in general, so numerous in the colony as in England. On our arrival at the encampment our party were quite ready for travelling, and we proceeded in the usual order of march down the vale, keeping the river on the east, or right of us.

Flocks of kangaroos of every size were seen on the flats. The animation of the blacks returned when they appeared, and petition after petition was made to me to allow the dogs to be let loose; but I would not consent. They had already made themselves ill and stupid by their voracious feeding, and I felt it would be a charity to restrain them. Independent of this consideration, the dry state of the ground, as well as the heat, had hardened and cracked the balls of the dogs' feet, and made them very lame.

The further we proceeded the more extensive and valuable the low lands became; and after travelling about four miles in this low country, we saw in front of us several high and barren mountains, which appeared to stretch across the vale and to bound it on the north. As they could not be more than six or seven miles from us, and appeared of a character so very distinct from any thing I had yet seen in Australia, I determined at once to strike across to them, then to follow them towards the east, which was the coast line, and to return by the stream by which

we were now descending, provided nothing of greater interest should occur to divert my plan.

We accordingly proceeded over a very pleasant country, consisting of low hills with narrow and pretty vallies intervening, of a middling quality of soil, clothed with timber, and sufficiently open to render the travelling agreeable; but still not permitting the eye to range much beyond the opposite hill or waving ground. It was with some impatience that I approached the high and rocky peaks which were elevated above the forest, like monuments in the wilderness, and which formed so remarkable a picture in this part of the colony. The country as we advanced became gradually more even and fertile, till at length we came upon a beautiful and rich flat of considerable extent, studded with the finest and most umbrageous apple-trees I had yet seen. From this level ground rose abruptly an almost naked range of sand-stone mountains, extending from west to east, and which commenced near the spot at which we had approached them. Several peaks towered high above the range, like the turrets of a fortified place, and on their tops grew a few stunted evergreens, giving to the whole the appearance of ivy-clad ruins. I perceived by the masses of dark foliage and shrubs extending in a line at the foot of the range, that it was washed by a stream of no ordinary size for this colony; and at the place where I examined it I found a considerable volume of water rolling over a ledge of rocks which extended across the river. The loud murmuring of a rapid and refreshing stream in such a climate, and in a country where running waters are not common, seemed for the moment, in the midst of such romantic scenery, like a species of enchantment. There appeared

to be every variety of beauty here which nature could present to the eye upon so limited a scale. If the plaintive notes of the nightingale, and the gay carolling of the blackbird could have been substituted for the harsh screeching of the cockatoos and the sharp grating chirps of the bell-birds, which are always found here by the side of rivers, I know of nothing which could have been desired to render the spot more attractive. Near the banks of this rapid current I pitched my tent, although it was not more than one o'clock in the day, for I could not deny myself the gratification of passing a few hours in such a scene.

The country on the banks of this river displayed a profusion of the richest herbage. The low grounds were every where bespangled with wild tares and butter-cups, whose pink and yellow blossoms reminded me of an English meadow, and called up in a moment so keen a recollection of *home*, with its thousand fond associations, as can be understood only by those who have been estranged from its hallowed enjoyments.

Several of the natives accompanied me up the river to explore its banks; but as I perceived the country to be more broken, and as the valley through which the streams descended became suddenly narrowed, I did not expect to find much rich country. We proceeded, however, four or five miles up, when we found on both sides of the river many rich blady grass flats, immediately on the margin, containing twenty or thirty acres each, describing a half circle, by the hills gradually drawing round them and closing upon the river, whose waters washed the base of the hills on each side alternately.

At a considerable distance from the source of most of

the rivers, the hills are generally sufficiently low to be ridden over without difficulty; but as the source is approached, they become more abrupt, and at length impassable, so that the traveller is forced across the river, and sometimes up its channel for several hundred yards, before he can get out of one flat into the other on the opposite side. The river is occasionally closed upon by rocky and precipitous hills, and on both sides covered with vines of low brush-wood, which prevent a passage over them. A stranger would imagine, on finding himself thus encompassed on every side, that the good country terminated here; but by persevering in different directions, he sometimes discovers a practicable pass, and is suddenly surprised by a richer and more extensively open country, than any he had before seen on the banks of the same stream.

My time not admitting of my proceeding further up in this direction, I returned with my black friends, who having been favoured with "murket," (guns,) shot several beautiful parrots and a couple of pigeons, which abounded in this quarter. The pigeons were scarcely so large as the common wood-pigeons in England: their colour was brown, with bronze wings, but in every other respect they resembled them. We found on the hills near the river the wild indigo plant, which flourishes most on those soils which are formed of decomposed argillaceous rock. Sarsaparilla also grew wild on the banks.

On my return to the tent, I found that the cook, Edwards, who had been an officer's servant at the battle of Waterloo, and had seen many a campaign, had discovered a spring of perfectly cold water, bubbling up at no great distance from the river. As soon as he saw me

returning, he went to the spring, and brought me a pannican full, presenting it to me as a treasure, which he said he had found in the grass. The day was hot, which had occasioned my blacks and myself to have recourse several times to the river, the sight, as well as the taste of whose waters was gratifying to me. But although these streams are generally shaded by patches of vines and shrubs, the water, in the hot days of summer, tastes nearly as warm as milk fresh from the cow. That which Edwards therefore had found, I felt indeed to be a treasure, not merely as the luxury of the moment, but for the benefit of our establishment, so likely to be extended to this spot.

This very spring, in such a climate, and in the centre of a district, (which, for the manufacture of cheese and butter is no where to be equalled in the colony,) was worth more than could be estimated. To have turned such a spring through a dairy during the sultry heats of summer, would have been every thing; and so thought Edwards, who was a Welchman, and knew a good deal of such affairs.

In the course of my life I have had many good domestics, but never one who served me with such unwearied zeal as this man, although he was a convict: the little property which I had was at all times in his power, both at home and when travelling. His was not, however, the only instance in which I met with attachment and good conduct amongst that class of people in New South Wales; who are frequently to be made more honest and useful by confidence and kind treatment than they have credit for. Edwards had been assigned to a rich settler near Sydney, by whom he had been returned to the go-

vernment as an untractable servant, when, with ten others, he was assigned to me. I received no character or recommendations with any of them : some were seven years' men, and others were what they call " lifers," to which class Edwards belonged. He was kept for some time in a gang of men who daily worked under an overseer. One of his comrades becoming very ill, Edwards was left in the hut by his overseer, to nurse and take care of him. His general demeanour, and the great attention which he paid to the sick man, attracted my notice ; and when his patient had recovered, I asked him a little of his history, and the reason of his having been " turned in," as they call it, to government. He told me his master was living with the wife of a convict, who was a low, disagreeable woman ; that there was no nature in her, as he termed it ; that, although he was a convict, he felt unhappy and degraded while under her control ; and as he wished, if possible, to re-establish his character, he resolved to hazard being turned in, with a complaint, and perhaps a flogging, and to begin anew somewhere else, rather than remain where he was, without hope during the remainder of his life. I observed to him at once, that the opportunity he had sought had now arrived ; that his character was again in his own hands ; and that, if he did not retrieve it, and reap its fair reward, the fault would be his own. From that time I took him into my own immediate service, and treated him with confidence, which during the two years he served me he never forfeited. The other two white servants who accompanied me were also convicts. No men could have behaved better than they all did upon the present occasion, and they appeared greatly to enjoy the novelty of their situation.

On our return to the tent, the blacks placed their parrots on the fire; and on my expressing a wish for the pigeons, they were instantly given up to Edwards. Nothing like selfishness was ever exhibited by them towards me, or any one else. Whenever they took honey from the tall trees in the forests, or gum arabic, which exudes from the mimosa shrubs, they always spontaneously brought a portion of it to me, and even pressed it upon me, although they were themselves fond of it to excess.

The blacks who had shot the parrots each took one from the fire, and divided them by pulling and tearing them to pieces with their fingers, although their tomahawks were always in their belts, and they could have had a knife, if they had chosen to ask for it. The birds were fairly divided between them all. One, who stood within reach near the fire, had his portion carelessly given to him; while those not within arm's length, were obliged to pick up their share from the ground, where it was tossed precisely as we would throw a piece of bread to a dog. They never adopted, in their intercourse with each other, any of the habits of refinement which they learned from and practised towards white people. The kangaroo was always distributed in the manner I have just described; but as it was more inconvenient to divide it with the fingers, the small hatchet or tomahawk was frequently used. Before we became acquainted with them, they used stone hatchets, which were sharpened by other stones to a pretty fine edge. These had a groove worked near the head, around which they twisted a stick, to serve as a handle, similar to those which the blacksmiths use for their chisels. They were closely fastened round the head by a very adhesive gum, resembling pitch, taken from a plant called

the grass-tree. This gum undergoes some refinement before it is used, and forms a part of the stock which the gins carry in their nets. It easily melts on the fire, but does not, like pitch, appear to be softened by the heat of the sun.

With their stone hatchets they can cut notches in the bark of any of the trees, which they climb for the wild honey, or for opossums and guanias. Thus the forest, in its natural state, affords them every thing necessary for their subsistence, combining, in many cases, an interest and a pleasure in the acquisition, which must, in a great degree, compensate for the absence of the conveniences and comforts of civilized life.

Like all animals whose meals depend upon a precarious supply, the natives can fast a very long time. They have often told me, that when "hungry good while," they tighten their opossum belts about the waist to alleviate the pains of hunger; and in wet weather, when they are perhaps kept in their gunyers for several days together, I have seen them, by means of those belts, drawn up in the flanks like greyhounds. They have a great idea of bandages, or rather ligatures, for if they sustain any injury of the limbs, or feel any pain from rheumatism, from which they frequently suffer, they tie a string very tight about the part affected, which they say relieves the pain.

Our party was very cheerful this evening, and I retired early to bed, in the anticipation of much pleasure on the morrow's journey down this beautiful valley.

Nov. 17th.—We accordingly rose early, and saddled and loaded our horses, and travelled without obstruction along the vale. The river wound beautifully on our left as we proceeded; sometimes there was a considerable

space between it and the hills, at other times it approached them. Its banks were overgrown by vines, casurino, mimosa, and various shrubs of darker hue than the general foliage, so that its course was very distinctly marked, although its waters were hidden. As we advanced, the meadow-ground widened very considerably, until we arrived on a fine level track with scarcely any timber (perhaps not more than one tree to an acre) upon it. We had not long been here before several fine emus started from the grass and shrubs near the river. The dogs were let loose, and the blacks were all upon the alert; but the long grass and shrubs by the side of the river, in which the birds took shelter, rendered it impossible to catch them: the frequent hunts, however, which took place, served to keep the party in a state of cheerful excitement.

Kangaroos were also seen in the greatest abundance, and although our dogs were not in the best order for running, still, as the country was so level and free from timber, such a fine opportunity for coursing could not be resisted, and we had accordingly some of the finest enjoyment of that sport which can be conceived, although we were not successful in killing game, the kangaroos being an over-match for the dogs.

In the centre of this fine flat was a small lake, or lagoon, very much resembling a piece of ornamental water in a park. It was very deep and clear, and its cool appearance under the mid-day sun of an Australian summer induced us to linger around it for a short time, although the ample supply of the river had already afforded us all that was required for our refreshment.

The view of the surrounding scenery from this spot

was very pleasing. The high and romantically-shaped range already described appeared from this position to curve a little; and from the boundary of the open country down the vale on the opposite side to the range, gentle slopes and hills rose from the verge of the plain, and the single trees with which they were ornamented gradually increased in number, while the ground was clothed with a carpet of rich green verdure beneath them. As I rode along I amused myself by fancying which would be the most agreeable spot for a residence; but there was such a succession of beautiful slopes and natural lawns, that I could make no selection. At length we arrived at the end of this very interesting reach of country, and saw on our right the stream which we had left on the preceding day; and which I saw must unite itself a little further down with that on our left, and by which we had been travelling through the day. As soon as we came to the junction of the streams we crossed over on our left, and encamped on the banks of their united waters. It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon, and I determined, as usual, to take a ride before dinner, attended by my faithful squire, Wool Bill. We wandered down the side of the river about half a mile, when I was suddenly surprised by the appearance of another river intersecting the vale from the sand-stone range on my left. I approached it with eager curiosity, and found a noble and rapid stream, containing at least three times as much water as the former one. The wide breaches which the force and rapidity of a swollen stream had made in its sides; the deep, but then dry furrows on its banks, occasioned by the overflowing of its waters; and the immense pieces of broken rock, as well as the rounded pebbles of no ordinary size which lay

scattered in the bed of its channel, strongly evidenced the existence of extensive floods. The quantity of water made it apparent that it must either take its rise at a considerable distance, or that the country through which it shaped its course must be more extensively mountainous than any I had hitherto seen. I felt quite impatient to trace it up, and to learn something of the unknown country through which it flowed; but the unceasing calls on my attention by the accumulating details of the Company's affairs at Port Stephens, did not afterwards admit of my making any attempt to explore it. I stood for some time listening to the murmurs of these romantic streams, unwilling to leave the wild yet peaceful scene, but was at length obliged to hasten back to the place of our encampment, (also a beautiful spot,) that I might arrive there before the sun had sunk below the hills.

I found that the blacks had returned from the forest with an ample supply of kangaroo, which they were busily engaged in preparing for dinner. A duck had also been shot, and nothing but want of time prevented our having a dish of fish to add to our already ample provision.

The importance of this country, and the streams connected with it, determined me to continue the encampment at least another day: and as it was not consistent either with my plans or the means with which we had equipped ourselves, to proceed to a greater distance from home at this period, I communicated to the natives that I should "nangry" here on the morrow, and then return home up the river which we had left the preceding day. They received this communication with great joy, and immediately began to repeat the names of their friends at home. They "corroberried," sang, laughed, and screamed; in

short, were like a set of boisterous schoolboys on the eve of a vacation. Jemmy Bungaree's loquacity during the evening became almost troublesome, and even the still, grave manner of poor Wool Bill was changed into smiles and playfulness beyond any thing I had ever seen in him before. All this showed me very clearly the sacrifice they had made in accompanying me. The agitated state of their minds at the idea of soon returning home was now a check to their gormandizing; and on the following morning, the 18th, they were very active in assisting to water the horses, and to make the fire, &c.

After breakfast I informed the cook that he was at liberty to amuse himself till dinner-time in any way he pleased: and as he was a man of observation, and had seen some pieces of coal which I had picked up by the side of the river, he proposed to explore it in the direction we had come yesterday, in order to search for the coal-seam, which I thought it probable he would find at no great distance. Some of the natives employed themselves in fishing: while I examined the gravelly bottom of the stream, in search of any curiosities that might be found there. After this I wandered for some hours over the meadows, sometimes up to my waist in the long grass; and then returned to the camp to join the sable fishing party. Edwards, the cook, had however returned before me, and brought with him a large block of coal, which he had cut with a hatchet from a spot in the bank of the river, where a small vein of coal had been laid bare by the action of the water. The natives had caught several fish, so that our first course at dinner consisted of a dish of fine perch, and some excellent kangaroo tail soup; followed by a rump-steak from a wool-man, which the

natives had killed the preceding day. I had the pleasure also of seeing our kettle boiled over a fire made with the coals found in the morning, and which proved to be of good quality.

It being quite evident to me that the waters which ran due east from the place where the three streams became united, must fall into the sea between Port Stephens and Port M'Quarie, and as the river during this dry season contained more water than any other which I had witnessed in the colony, I determined to trace down its course as far as I could, and to examine the country on its banks on the following day. With this view I started early in the morning, taking Edwards and two of the natives with me. We crossed to the south side of the river, almost immediately opposite our camp, and ascended the lowest point of the hills. Not being encumbered with our pack-horses we travelled more rapidly than usual, and struck into the forest on the south or right of the river, at a considerable distance from it. The country here was of an inviting description, and although not rich, it appeared well calculated for sheep. The hills were generally easy of access, and no where abrupt; they were also grassy and dry, and were connected by narrow glens and hollows covered with long grass of a good quality. After travelling for several miles over this sort of country, we took a slanting direction, and again met the river winding its course among the hills. I now determined to follow it as closely as possible, but found I could not proceed without some difficulty; it being in some places shut in by the hills, and at others rendered unapproachable by low brush-wood overspread with vines. After rounding these, we again met the stream flowing

through small rich meadows nearly clear of timber. Occasionally deep and wide gullies crossed our path, and appeared to extend into the country on our right to a considerable distance, exhibiting the tremendous effects of the torrents during the periodical rains.

Having proceeded about seven or eight miles in this direction, and wishing to reach the camp by the evening, I found it necessary now to think of returning. Having ascended an eminence near me, to take a view of the surrounding country, I was enabled to observe distinctly the windings of the river through the vale as far as the eye could distinguish. The country in every other direction was broken, and in some places very mountainous. Some of the hills differed in character from those we had generally met with; being clothed to their summits with vines, whose dark shade, in contrast with the open or thinly-timbered sides of others, caused an agreeable variety in the scenery. To a settler in search of good country these vines must always be a favourable omen, because they will only flourish in the richest soils. I observed in every quarter clouds of smoke rising from the grass, which had been accidentally set on fire by the natives. Had we travelled down the vale, I have no doubt we should have met some of the native tribes. I was surprised and disappointed at not having met some of them in the fine country near our present encampment. We every where saw traces of them in abandoned gun-
yers, in notches they had cut in the trees, by which they ascend for the wild honey or the opossum, and in the incisions in the bark whence they had extracted the grub-worm, or large larva of an insect which is deposited there.

The scenery from my present position was exceedingly interesting, heightened as it was by the clearness of the atmosphere and the brilliancy of the sun. In a country so broken as New South Wales, it is impossible to ascertain the nature and extent of available soil without actually going over it; but as the good land is generally found in the neighbourhood of rivers, or considerable streams, I augured favourably of the district we were now in, having no doubt that the water which washed the base of the hill on which I stood, must be the great outlet of many collateral branches from the surrounding country; and that in its final progress to the sea it would pass through a rich tract of flat or undulating ground.

On descending from the hill I determined to return to our party by the straightest possible line on the opposite side of the river to that by which we had come. When we came to the river which ran from the north side of the sand-stone range, and which crossed our track at right angles, one of the natives was sent down as usual to find a good crossing-place, and he conducted us to a spot where the water ran over a wide and rocky bottom, to the edges of which the ground gradually sloped from the forest on both sides, so that we crossed with great facility, with the water not higher than the horses' knees. The district being so unusually fine, and running water being rarely met with in Australia during the dry season, it is not easy to describe the pleasure which it conveyed on this hot afternoon to the tired and thirsty beings now travelling through the solitary forest. In a short time we entered the meadow where our horses were grazing, at no great distance from the camp.

The three natives who had been left at home had been

anxiously expecting us, and met us on our return with great joy : every minute was as an hour, and every hour a day to them till the time arrived when their faces should be turned towards their real home. Some of their first words to me on this occasion were, “ Where nangry to-morrow, massa ? ” and on my pointing towards home, they danced about like harlequins, calling out, “ Budgeree you, budgeree you, murry good massa, murry good massa,” &c. and while my dinner was preparing they sat in the grass singing, as they usually do when they are happy.

On the morning of the 20th we left our position at the junction of the rivers, and although the natives were so happy to quit it, I must say it was not without regret that I left a country which possessed in its natural state more capabilities for enjoyment than any spot I had ever beheld of equal extent. The country on our left, as we proceeded, was bounded by a mountainous range, and the stream which we were following up, made its way through flats or natural meadows, uninterrupted by hills of any kind, excepting a few low and thickly-wooded slopes on the outer margin of the flats on our right. A considerable portion of the land on both sides of the river was good, and some of it of the very best description ; such as would support and fatten the best cattle. Here and there we saw tall and single gum-trees with smooth white bark. They were not sufficiently umbrageous to afford much shade ; but the fine water, and the shade which the thickly-wooded hillocks on the verge of the flats afforded, gave much value to this level tract of country.

In the district in which I was this day travelling, I did not observe a foot of good land which rose above the in-

fluence of the floods, and which was not composed of the decayed argillaceous rock.

We saw constant traces of the natives during our journey, and in one instance they could not have left their bivouac more than a few hours before we arrived at it, as the fire they had left was still burning, and the prints of their naked feet on the burnt ground near the fire were so fresh that our natives exclaimed, "You tee, massa, mandoebah (feet) belonging to bush black most (almost) here now." They were well upon their guard after this all day, watching and tracking like hounds; but we saw none of the strangers.

After proceeding about thirteen miles, we arrived at the spot on the banks of the river where we had encamped on the 16th, and where I again pitched my tent. We had many kangaroo courses during the day, but our dogs were unable to catch any, part of them having been wounded by their previous battles with the large male kangaroos; this, together with tender feet, and a want of good *breeding*, prevented their successful pursuit of the game. The natives however had shot several guanassas, and had hunted down a paddymelon, (a very small species of kangaroo, which is found in the long grass and thick brushes,) and had therefore provided a part of their dinner, while the flour and Indian corn-meal which was served out to them, made up the deficiency. In the evening they went with their fire-arms in search of kangaroos, and just before dark returned in high spirits with three or four. I seldom gave them any ammunition beyond a single charge, and as it was their pride to bring home their game, they seldom fired unless they could take a pretty sure aim. When a kangaroo was much wanted, I gave them a spare

charge, which was carried under the opossum belt. They always preferred ball cartridges when they could have them, and next to these buck-shot, or "butchot," as they pronounced it. They knew perfectly well how to charge and manage a gun; but would never clean it unless obliged to do so. The love of eating their game after they had brought it home, and the extraordinary passion which they all had for tobacco, led them on their return to think only of sitting round the fire and smoking their pipes while the kangaroo was roasting. They were also exceedingly fond of the grains of Indian corn roasted in the ashes.

During the whole of this journey I never once observed them to have any disagreement amongst themselves, except about the wheeling of the perambulator. My plan was always to act towards them as though they were children: when I thought it right to refuse them any thing, I told them the reason and admitted of no appeal. There would have been no end of their beggings and wants if I had given way to them; and although it was of the utmost consequence to me not to lose them on our journey, still I had learned enough of their characters to know that kindness would not retain them unless it were united with firmness. When they wanted to ask me a favour they previously discussed it amongst themselves. I saw this evening that there was something in agitation, and although the consultation was held in their native language, I knew by the words "asrahbelhah" and "massa," which frequently occurred, that their conference had some reference to *blankets*. At length Wickie came to me with the most modest look imaginable, and in a very soft tone asked me on what day we should reach home;

observing that they had been a very long way, and that they were all much tired, &c. After a little hesitation he said, "all black pellow's been piola (speaking) me how massa gib it blanket when go Port Tebid." I did not give an immediate answer, and he then observed, "pose gib it blanket, den go in bush gain, you know." I told him that I knew they would neither use nor keep blankets more than a few days during the warm season, if I consented to their request, and that they should therefore have the blankets when the cold weather came, but not at present. The other four natives were sitting at the fire roasting their corn, and within hearing during this conversation; they said not a word, but as I was much interested in their actions just then, I kept my eye upon them, and could scarcely keep my gravity on observing the sly leers that passed amongst them, and the touching of their elbows against each other's sides, as Wickie advanced to the point. They were perfectly satisfied, I believe, with my promise, as I heard no more of it then, and they appeared to be as cheerful as I could wish.

On the following morning, which was the 21st, we proceeded towards home for several miles on the same line by which we had travelled on the 15th. A short distance before we approached the place where I had left the fig of tobacco in the tree, I observed Wickie and Bungaree pressing forward before me, and as I immediately saw that they intended to appropriate it to themselves, I determined to have a joke with them. I allowed them first to go out of my sight, and then overtook them in a short time, when they were laughing immoderately: I thought we were at least half a mile from the spot, and told them I knew what they were laughing about, but that I should

arrive at the tobacco before them. I immediately galloped off, as I thought, to the spot, which, however, I could not find; and in hunting for it had nearly lost myself again in the forest. As soon as we met again they all set up a loud laugh, while Wickie held up the tobacco between his fingers in triumph. Their recollections of the place were much more accurate than mine, for they had taken the tobacco almost immediately after they had passed me, while I in my hurry had gone by the tree. Every now and then Wickie pointed with a cunning laugh to the tobacco stuck in his belt, calling out, "belonging to black pellow, massa!" The merriment which this little incident had excited was kept up by them all day, and was long afterwards remembered at Port Stephens, and talked of with animated looks and pleasure by Wickie and Bungaree.

As it was my intention to sleep this evening at the place where we had stopped on the 14th, I sent the party on, while taking Wickie with me I varied my route to our bivouac. After some little difficulty we ascended some high hills, traversed them as far as I wished, and then took a view of the surrounding country, which appeared as usual very broken, and varied between low hills and others of greater elevation, there being chains of high mountainous ranges in the distance on all sides of us. We then descended into a small valley at the foot of the hills, where there was a large flock of kangaroos feeding upon the young and tender grass which had sprung up after the fires of the natives. My companion was, as usual, all animation at the sight, but we had then neither gun nor dogs. I had, however, a brace of horse-pistols in my holsters, and he petitioned for one of them,

assuring me with much earnestness that he would approach within a few paces of a kangaroo and shoot it, if I would quietly wait where I was. As I thought we should have plenty of time, I gave him the pistol, feeling no little curiosity to see how he would effect his purpose. I expressed great doubts of his success, and this made him the more eager to prove his skill. We were not more than about three hundred yards from the flock, but as we were partly concealed from them by the winding of the hill from which we had descended, they continued quite undisturbed, and I dismounted and seated myself on a fallen tree, from which I could observe Wickie's motions, as well as those of the kangaroos. He placed himself in a line with the trees, which concealed his body as he advanced. He crept on exactly like a cat when it draws upon its prey, occasionally shifting his position with the greatest caution as the kangaroo moved, so as always to have a tree in a line between himself and his game. The kangaroo would sometimes take an alarm and place itself suddenly in an erect position upon its haunches, with its ears pricked up, listening and looking in every direction about him. Upon this Wickie would instantly pause, and in whatever position his body might be at the moment, he remained fixed to the spot like a tree in the forest, till the animal resumed its feed again. He several times turned his head cautiously towards me, (his body still bending forward,) stretching back his left hand with a tremulous motion, as much as to bespeak my quiet observation of his proceedings. I watched him in this way with intense interest for at least half an hour, when suddenly the remainder of our party entered the valley and put all the kangaroos to flight. Wickie could not have

felt more disappointed at this moment than I did. He immediately returned to me with a disappointed and angry countenance, and on my condoling with him, he broke out into some very angry expressions against the pack-horses and all who had accompanied them. I had no doubt that he would have performed the feat which he attempted, had no interruption taken place, and assured him of this belief, but he was inconsolable. He returned the pistol, and walked on without uttering another word, to the place where the tent was about to be fixed, when he threw himself upon the grass, determined not to be pleased upon any terms. I pitied the poor fellow, but thought he would soon come round if left to himself, and therefore took no further notice of him for a time.

As soon as the fire was kindled and other matters arranged for the night, the pipes and roasted corn were put in requisition as usual by the rest of the natives; but poor Wickie joined in neither. We had brought several haunches of kangaroo with us, and the natives had as much of it as was necessary for them; but Wickie refused this also. I now saw that his previous excitement had exceeded any thing of which I had supposed him capable; that it had been suddenly checked by severe disappointment, which, without the employment of reason to counteract it, had actually made him ill. He was, however, persuaded to take a little tea, after which he resumed his former position in the grass; and on my pressing him to tell me what was the matter, he complained of a pain in his head. "Murry tick," as he called it, "all over belonging to cobrer," (head.) I could scarcely persuade myself that such an effect could be produced from so trifling a cause; yet when I compared his present state with his

cheerful and happy manner through the day, up to the very moment of his disappointment, and the unusual violence with which he expressed himself on its occurrence, I was inclined to think his present illness was in a great measure, if not entirely the effect of it. Before I retired to rest I examined him more minutely, and finding that his loss of appetite was accompanied by fever and a continued pain in the head, I gave him some medicine, and had him wrapped up in a blanket. He passed a restless night, and was so ill in the morning and during the day, as to render it very difficult to get him on with us. He was very tractable, particularly quick in his perceptions as well as in his feelings, and always appeared to possess greater capabilities of civilization than any other native I had seen.

We returned home by the valley to the south-east, in which were some very rich undulations between two high ranges, watered by a small river that ran through its centre. We saw here abundant traces of the wild natives: the smoke from their fires and from the grass which was burning in various directions amongst the hills, frequently ascended in thick clouds at a distance on all sides of us. Several recently-inhabited gunyers were met with, and notches in the trees were also frequently observed: some of these were made with iron and others with stone hatchets; but we were not so fortunate as to fall in with any of the tribes in this quarter.

Immense quantities of kangaroos were feeding on the young grass, but our dogs were nearly worn out by wounds and fatigue; we, however, had one course with a doe kangaroo, which on being hard pressed threw a young one from her while she was going at full speed, by putting

her fore arm in her pouch and ridding herself of the burthen. The young one was large enough to jump away at a pretty good pace; but was soon secured by the natives, who were half frantic at the sight of so much game.

About the middle of the day we were overtaken by a thunder storm, which was the first I had ever encountered in the forest while in company with the natives. It was very severe while it lasted, and was accompanied by a violent hurricane and a heavy fall of rain. The thunder, when near, and during the first period of the storm, was much louder, and the lightning more vivid than in England. The clouds became at length scattered in every quarter of the horizon, and as each was charged with electric matter, explosions were kept up continuously for a considerable time, like discharges from a large park of artillery. Nothing could be more grand and awful than the agitated state of the elements, during this storm. The situation too in which I was placed was a very novel one, and made an impression not easy to be forgotten. On the approach of the storm we ran to the river side, where we found shelter under some large trees, and were still further protected by the thick-spreading vines which grew under them. The noise which the hurricane made amongst the trees in the forest and over our heads was terrific: the poor blacks were dreadfully alarmed, not only at the thunder, but from the fear of the trees near us being blown down: some of them crouched under the vines, watching the trees above them; and others stood trembling and shivering in the rain by my side, telling me to look out for the thunder-bolt ("Coen," or the devil, as they believed.) As soon as the storm abated a little they all began simultaneously to sing, or

rather to make a murmuring noise for a few minutes. On a sudden they tossed up their heads towards the parting clouds, and hooted at them with great violence, clapping their hands at the same time. They then observed to me: "Black pellow tend him away toon, massa." They repeated this ceremony till the storm was nearly over, after which they claimed the merit of having dispersed it, and no doubt sincerely believed in the influence of their charm.

I was exceedingly anxious to learn to what cause they attributed thunder and lightning, and put many questions to them upon the subject. I could, however, learn nothing from them, except that it was Coen, who was very angry and come to frighten them; but of the origin or the motives and employment of Coen I could not now, more than upon former occasions, get any other explanation than that he was in form like a black man, and an evil being who delighted in tormenting and carrying them away when he could find opportunities.

On resuming our journey, I saw enough to satisfy me that we had been fortunate as to the asylum to which the poor natives had conducted us; for branches and large limbs of trees were strewed on the ground in every direction, and in several instances, trees were blown up. Except in the place where we had found shelter, or one similar to it, out of the current of the wind, we could hardly have escaped from injury. In these small vallies, and the sides of hills, the hurricane upon such occasions makes sad havoc, of which, what I had experienced this day, as well as the heaps of decayed trees which I had often seen prostrate along the sides of thickly-timbered hills, afforded sufficient evidence.

We encamped this evening in a pleasant country.

The blacks, except Wickie, showed the most unbounded joy at the sight of their native hills, which had been seen just before we crossed a high ridge which lay in our path. It was with difficulty that we brought our sick friend on: as soon as the party stopped, a bed of grass was made for him; and in the course of the evening he revived a little, and showed some signs of pleasure on hearing his companions talk of home and of their friends. If they had been absent for years, they could not have exhibited more joy than they did upon the present occasion. This was of itself a sufficient indication that they usually confine themselves to a very narrow space of country, and to their own society.

On the following morning, the 22nd of Nov., we retraced our steps to the place where we had encamped the first night, on the banks of a navigable river, where we were met by our boats, which had been rowed up by natives in company with one white man, according to an appointment made on the day of our departure.

I was received by them with the greatest cordiality, and greeted by the term *bingeye*, or brother. I was welcomed the more ardently, from its having been reported at Port Stephens that our party had been attacked by natives, and that I had been either killed or badly wounded by a spear. This false rumour, I had no doubt, had been circulated by some of the convicts, who were continually inventing stories of every description from the mere love of mischief. I afterwards learned, that when the natives heard of what they believed to be my fate, they set up the usual cry or howl which always takes place upon the death of any of their near relations. The conduct of our natives throughout this short expedition,

and of their brethren at the settlement during my absence and on my return, afforded ample proofs that these poor people were not insensible to kind treatment; that the impression of it was not merely of a momentary nature; and that their friendship and good services were well worth the trouble of securing, both as a matter of feeling and as a measure of policy.

Our sick friend Wickie soon recovered, and the importance of the travellers was no doubt increased amongst their companions, by their having performed such an unprecedented journey in a strange land.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NATIVES RECEIVE THEIR PROMISED REWARD—THEIR DELIGHT—ANECDOTES—CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGES—PREPARATIONS FOR AN EXECUTION—A NATIVE SPEARS A SHEPHERD—POSTPONEMENT OF THE EXECUTION—SEARCH AFTER THE OFFENDING NATIVE—THE SHEPHERD'S HUT—WILD HONEY—NATIVE AGILITY—DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY—GRASS-TREES—NATIVE ENCAMPMENT—MEETING BETWEEN A BROTHER AND SISTER—RAIN—THE HOPE OF FINDING THE CULPRIT GIVEN UP—ANXIOUS TO RETURN HOME AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE—RAIN CONTINUES—MEETING WITH STRANGE NATIVES—FISHING—EXERTIONS OF TWO NATIVES—ARRIVAL AT PORT STEPHENS—ALARM OF A FEMALE NATIVE AND CHILD—SEQUEL TO THE HISTORY OF THE MEN CONDEMNED TO BE EXECUTED.

ON the morning after our arrival, I was called upon for the shirts and trowsers which I had promised; when I immediately gave an order for them, and also for the two cotton handkerchiefs which I had promised to Wickie and Maty Bill, for accompanying me to the parley with the strange natives. In about half an hour they all returned, in their duck trowsers and check shirts, and entered my apartment without any bidding, to exhibit themselves. The two men with red and white striped neckerchiefs, had adjusted them so as to show the collars of the shirt above them in the European style, and had, besides, tied them (or some white person had done it for

them) with a fine flaring bow under the chin. They looked as proud and delighted as newly-breeched boys. A small looking-glass was lying on a shelf near me, and the gentlemen with the cravats begged that I would allow them to see their figures in it. It was immediately presented to them, when it passed from one to the other, till at length Maty Bill retained it, in order to adjust his shirt collar, which he did by pulling the ends up to his cheek bones; but while in the act, the glass was snatched from him, and went the round again and again. I allowed them to use it for a considerable time, and while they were tittering and disputing in their own language upon their comparative beauty and elegance, I laughed heartily at the scene. At length I took the glass from them, and gave to each a pipe with a piece of tobacco, taking the opportunity of praising them for their good conduct, and telling them, as I had done many times before, that we were all bingeyes, (brothers,) and that I should always take care of them while they remained good fellows, and belonged to me.

The result of all my experiments thus far with the natives, proved to me that more might be done with them by judicious management than was generally believed; although, situated as I was, I saw numerous insurmountable obstacles to carrying their improvement beyond a certain point. The increase of society, and the spread of the branch establishments of the Company, necessarily occasioned a more promiscuous communication between the white people and the natives than was useful to the latter; and as no beneficial system for their amelioration could be carried to any extent, unless they were removed to a distance from vicious society, and placed

under the eye of a zealous, humane person, employed for that purpose only, every day's experience convinced me that the character of the natives would retrograde in proportion to the increase of European population, which at that place could not be of the best description. In order to show how far they might be managed in the absence of counteracting circumstances, I will here relate two very singular, and I think instructive instances, of the effect produced upon their minds by the conduct I had adopted towards them.

Shortly after my return from the journey I have just narrated, a native, who called himself Youee, informed me that his wife had been taken from him by a native who resided at the Coal River. He always appeared uneasy when he mentioned her, and wished to have her restored, but was afraid to attempt a rescue at such a distance from home. One day, as I was in the garden, I saw a native running towards me down the hill, at the foot of which was the garden fence; and as soon as he arrived there, he beckoned to me in quick succession, and with an agitated voice, called out, "Massa! massa! massa! you come here, you come here!" I immediately joined him, and found him in an almost breathless state of anxiety; his body leaning, his nostrils open, and his eyes ready to start from their sockets. This agitated appearance alarmed me, and I took it for granted that murder had been committed. Before I could say a word to him, he informed me that he had discovered his gin, who had come to the settlement with her present master—that they were both sitting down together near the store. After stating this, he said several times, in a hurried and anxious tone and manner, "You gib it ticket, you gib it

ticket, massa!" I did not at first exactly understand his meaning, when he repeated his words with increased emotion, giving me to understand, that if he produced an order from me on a piece of paper, the black would be obliged to give his wife up to him. I was not aware that my influence amongst them had extended so far as this, and could scarcely believe that a native who had come from a distance, would entertain sufficient respect for me to obey my mandate, although my own people might do so. Youee's idea of a ticket, as he called it, was quite new to me; but as I saw, in this instance, how much they depended upon me with reference to affairs between themselves, as well as in other respects, I instantly took the advantage of it, and gave him a piece of paper, signed, with an explanation upon it, for fear the constables should interfere improperly, in the event of a quarrel between them. As soon as he had received this paper, he stuck one end of it in his opossum belt, and left the other hanging out, walking off with great confidence and importance, telling me he should be sure to have her again, and that he would immediately bring her to me. I impatiently awaited Youee's return, to see whether, from the report of my black people, my influence extended to strangers, or whether it was limited to Port Stephens. In about twenty minutes, Youee returned with his gin by his side, each of them smiling and appearing equally pleased at the restoration. The ticket was still in his belt, from which he took it, and returned it to me, observing, "Dat murry good pellow: pose black pellow lose him gin, den come massa, dat gib ticket always." He informed me that the black man delivered her up immediately on his showing the ticket; and Nanny pro-

tested that she had never wished to leave Youee, but that she had been forced to do so. Whether this were true or not, she continued afterwards to live with Youee, together with several children which she said were his.

Not long after this, a native called Corbon Tom wished to take a wife. The lass to whom he was attached appeared to be about fifteen years old: she belonged to a tribe on Hunter's River, and had, in company with her family, been several weeks upon a visit at Port Stephens. Finding that he could not gain her consent, and being afraid to break the law I had laid down against carrying women off by force, according to their custom in the forest, he came to consult me in the matter, hoping to get my authority to aid his suit. He opened the business in the following words: "Massa, I look out black gin: I bleve murry nice girl, tit down Carabeen," (the name of the village.) "Well," said I, "have you asked her if she will have you?" He informed me that he had, but that she said, "No." I then observed, that he must not take her unless she consented. To this he said: "Pose gib ticket, massa, he come den." "Well," I said, "I will give you a ticket, if you will come here with her immediately; but mind, you are not to have her, unless she consents willingly before me." To this he assented; and he accordingly, as Youee had done, took a piece of paper, the sight of which, with Tom's explanation, was considered by her as an authority which compelled her to come with him directly to me. Notwithstanding what I had before seen, I had considerable doubt as to her coming upon such an occasion, and especially as she was not a constant resident with us; but my

doubts were soon ended, by seeing the couple walking briskly towards me. The pleasure depicted upon Tom's countenance on his arrival, did not at all correspond with the downcast looks of the poor girl, whose whole appearance was that of a criminal about to be sacrificed. But this was of no moment in Tom's mind; possession, whether with or without her consent, was his object; and he had evidently calculated that she would not dare to refuse him before me. There was no difficulty in discovering at once how the matter stood between them, and I conducted the affair accordingly. I immediately asked her whether she liked Tom. She held down her head, and made no answer: Tom, however, soon supplied the omission, by calling out, "Yes, massa, yes," and desired her to say so. Upon this I desired him to hold his tongue, and to answer only when I spoke to him. Strong expressions of impatience and anger were now marked in his countenance, while she stood trembling by his side. I now gave her fully to understand that I had not sent for her to marry Tom, but only to know whether she liked him, and was willing to have him; that, if she did not like to marry him, she need not do it; and that I would take care he should not hurt her. She took courage at this, and immediately said, in a plaintive tone, "I like anoder black pellow." Tom's disappointment and rage could no longer be restrained; he gave her a violent push on the chest, from which the poor thing recoiled several steps, looking up at him in a state of perfect terror; whilst he, boiling with rage, snatched his waddy from his belt, and advanced with uplifted arms, as if to fell her to the ground. At this moment I gave him with my fist a blow behind the ear, which sent him stag-

gering from me, and I followed him up, with a view of disarming him, and of repeating the punishment in case of resistance; but he instantly dropped his waddy, and held down his head like a guilty culprit. I then expostulated and reasoned with him, but he neither spoke nor once lifted his eyes from the ground. He was now dreadfully alarmed as well as disappointed, and both love and rage were apparently frightened out of him, by the unexpected conduct I had adopted. I told him decidedly that he could not have the girl, because she was engaged to another, and because she was not willing to have him; that white men did not take their gins unless with their free will; and that I should not allow any black man belonging to me to take a gin without her consent. The poor girl stood mute and trembling during this scene, but before she left me she said: "Tom murry coulour, (angry,) when go black camp, dat break it cobrer (head) belonging to me." I told her that he should not molest her, and that, if he attempted to do so, I would send him to the watch-house. Tom had by this time come to his senses, and on hearing me mention the watch-house in case he persisted, he answered: "*You* coulour now, massa?" I said, "No, no more coulour, suppose you do as I tell you." He assured me he would. After this, I ordered the girl to go to the camp alone, while I kept him with me for a time. He resumed his usual cheerfulness with me immediately after she was gone, and we at length parted on the best possible terms. The girl remained several days afterwards on the establishment with her friends; and although Tom, as I understood, made several civil attempts afterwards to gain her consent, she finally left it without becoming his wife.

These incidents will show that I had acquired an uncommon degree of influence over these poor creatures. Had I been placed in a situation on an establishment of a different nature, with equal means at my command, and with sufficient leisure at my disposal, I have little doubt that I could have produced results worthy of the time and trouble which I should with infinite pleasure have bestowed upon objects so interesting to me.

The practice of sending tickets was afterwards much abused by persons giving them in my name without my knowledge or authority, for purposes of their own when they required the services of the natives. At length they were disobeyed, except when taken from me by one of their own people, and carried by himself to the native whose presence was required; and in this case a piece of paper from my hand would instantly produce any one or more of them.

The discoveries made during the last journey induced me to form an agricultural and sheep establishment in the fine country described in the early part of the journal, about twenty miles from the harbour; before, however, this could be attempted, considerable labour was bestowed in opening a line of road to it, and in constructing several strong wooden bridges over deep streams, which were otherwise impassable for carriages, and in the rainy seasons not fordable at any point even for horses. The bridges were formed by felling long trees and throwing them across the river, their ends resting on each bank; others were sometimes laid in the ground inversely, either to raise the bank to equal height, or as a proper foundation for those that were thrown across. Trees were then split into thick slabs, and laid across the bearers, and

sometimes grooved into them, firmly spiked and pegged, to prevent their being carried away during the floods. These bridges were always found to be permanently effectual when properly constructed. They were made by convicts, under the superintendence of a free overseer, and without the aid of any regular mechanic. A party similarly composed was at the same time occupied in building huts for shepherds and stockmen at the different stations selected.

In some parts of the colony, where it is not the business of any individual to do more than he can avoid, the first settler makes way over the water-courses by cutting down the banks. In this state the tract will perhaps remain for years, unless it happen to be on the line of communication between two much-frequented places, or one of which the government requires to make use. In my case, however, it was necessary to set about the good work immediately; for where large bodies of men require to be settled at *once*, one of the first and most important steps is to provide for their being *regularly* fed, and this could only be accomplished by opening a communication as free from obstruction and the possibility of casualties as the nature of the case would admit, thereby assuring a regular transport of stores, in the absence of proper buildings to contain a sufficient supply of provisions for any length of time.

Nothing decisive was made known until March, 1827, of the fate of the criminals who had in the preceding September been found guilty of the murder of the native boy. I was at that period officially informed that it was intended to have them executed at Port Stephens, by way of example to others in that quarter. This announce-

ment caused great uneasiness in the minds of all our people: preparations were immediately made for the fatal ceremony by the erection of a platform and drop between two high trees near the village; coffins were at the same time got ready by order of the governor, and every fair wind led to the most anxious expectation of descrying the vessel which was to convey the unhappy criminals. The inhabitants were kept in this painful state of excitement for more than a fortnight, when an incident occurred which produced still greater alarm in the minds of all the white population at Port Stephens, and in the end averted the fate of the condemned men.

Some cause for dispute having arisen between the distant native tribes inhabiting the country about the head of the Myall River and those near Port Stephens, the parties met near the harbour for the purpose of settling their disputes in a general encounter. Three of the natives from the Myall went to one of the sheep stations, and finding there only two shepherds, who were unarmed, they made an attack with the view of destroying them both. They succeeded in spearing one of them in the body, and robbing both of their blankets and provisions, with which they immediately made off. The news was quickly conveyed to Port Stephens, where it produced a very unfavourable effect upon the minds of the inhabitants, more especially on those of the convicts, being just at the moment when three of the latter class were about to suffer the penalty of the law for a similar offence to that which the black men had just attempted to commit.

It was incumbent on me in such a situation to take the most prompt and decisive steps for securing the offenders,

if possible, not only for the sake of justice itself, but also to show the convicts that I was as anxious to protect the one party as the other. I therefore determined to proceed instantly in search of the natives. Before, however, I left the settlement, I wrote to inform the governor of what had occurred, and to beg that he would, if possible, suspend the intended executions until the result of my pursuit should be known.

The natives on the establishment, who were likewise in a state of great excitement at the event, did not fail to load their enemies with every opprobrious epithet they could think of, and prepared to accompany me in pursuit of the criminals in greater numbers than it would have been convenient to take. I at length took fifteen of the best of them, besides three soldiers, two white attendants, and Mr. Pennington, whose natural good feelings and strong sense of justice led him to enter zealously with me upon this service. Previous to leaving the settlement, the blacks each petitioned for a musket, asserting that they should not be safe in their enemy's country without one. I supplied muskets to six of them, and the remainder received each a sword, which was suspended by a belt over the shoulder, like that worn by a serjeant. The following are the names of the natives who accompanied me upon this expedition :

1. Wickie.
2. M'Quarie.
3. Bungaree.
4. Wool Bill.
5. Wallis.
6. Youee.
7. Carabeau Youee.

8. Sinbad.
9. Crosely.
10. Carabean Wickie.
11. Winkle.
12. Dick.
13. Pisherman.
14. Captain Piper.
15. Carabean Bill.
16. Boy Neddy.
17. Boy Carabah.

The names which they bear are generally assumed by themselves. They are fond of taking those of white people in preference to their own, and they frequently brought young children and infants to be named by me.

I started on horseback with my companion, Mr. Pennington, followed by the party described, and six heavily laden pack-horses. As soon as we moved from the shore, my men, both black and white, gave three loud cheers. The scene at this moment would have been worthy the pencil of a Hogarth. Every native had his hair dressed in the conical form I have before described, ending with a tuft of grass. Some were entirely naked, others wore trousers, drawn up to their armpits by braces, and several had on old soldiers' jackets without trousers. I found too that nearly all those who had not been supplied with muskets had borrowed fowling-pieces from their white friends on the settlement, so that they were now armed to their heart's content.

We were accompanied for a short distance by a considerable number of the natives, who yielded very reluctantly to my orders to return. It was impossible to carry provisions for so many, and I was therefore compelled to

fix some limits to the number of my followers. Two boys, about ten or twelve years of age, were very urgent in their entreaties to be allowed to accompany me; but I could not accede to their wishes, and supposed that they had returned with their friends; however, after proceeding several miles, these fine little fellows were observed skulking at some distance behind us amongst the trees. Finding that they were alone I called them to us, and allowed them to join our party.

As it was noon before we left the settlement, we could not that day proceed beyond the station where the wounded man lay. On our arrival there I proceeded to take his deposition, which he was quite equal to make, not then appearing in any immediate danger. He minutely described the men who had made the attack, and the natives of our party said they knew their persons, (especially that of one of them, who was lame,) and appeared satisfied that we should trace them.

The mode of making the attack showed a vast deal of cunning. They approached the sheepfold in apparent friendship, but as soon as they ascertained that the men were alone and unarmed, they demanded of the latter their provisions and blankets, showing at the same time every symptom of hostility. If the white men, instead of becoming alarmed, had themselves made the attack when all were in the hut together, where there was no room for hurling spears, the natives might easily have been overcome and secured; instead of which they yielded to the demands of their assailants, who had no sooner left the hut than they threw several spears in at the doorway, and inflicted the wound already described. The frightened men having crouched

in a corner of the hut to avoid the spears, their opponents then discharged them obliquely ; and when they had exhausted their weapons, the man who had not been pierced moved from his hiding-place, and broke all the spears, which were sticking in the sides of the hut, when the natives ran off, and made no further attempt to molest the men.

On leaving the shepherd's station we proceeded across the country, in the direction of two large lakes connected with the Myall River, and which our natives informed us was the quarter to which the tribe in question belonged. After travelling about six miles we came to the place where we were convinced they had slept the preceding evening, as we observed some flour and part of one of the men's bed-rugs upon the ground. One of my natives, a remarkably fine and intelligent lad, who called himself Pisherman (fisherman,) had belonged to and been brought up chiefly amongst these tribes : his mother had belonged to Port Stephens, and on her husband's death she returned there with her children, to be again amongst her relatives. He knew the lame man perfectly, and as we proceeded repeatedly pointed out his footsteps, distinguishing them from the foot-prints of his companions in flight. Being thus enabled to follow their track, and not supposing that they suspected our pursuit, I felt pretty certain that we should come up with them. That our proceeding might be conducted as quietly as possible, I took with me no dogs, nor would I allow any muskets to be fired off, so that the favourite amusements of hunting and shooting were denied to my sable companions during this journey: they had consequently to subsist entirely on our stock of provisions, with the occasional addi-

tion of snakes, grubs, opossums, kangaroo-rats, guanas, wild-honey, and roots, when any of these came in their way.

The country which we passed over to-day was very variable: the hills were not high, but dry, grassy, and rather thickly timbered, with narrow valleys intervening. The river Myall was about ten miles distant on our right, between which and ourselves a range of lofty hills ran from north to south, intersecting our route to the north-east.

The natives were remarkably cheerful as we travelled on, so much so that I was frequently obliged to check them. They were now too numerous and well armed to have the fears evinced in our former journey, and the presence of the soldiers gave them additional confidence, though the hostile tribe was very numerous.

In the course of this day Wool Bill, who was a volunteer upon the occasion, discovered a choogar-bag, (wild honey,) nearly at the top of a very high tree, and called out to the party to stop; I wished, however, to go on, and desired him to proceed, but he and Neddy (one of the boys whom I have described as following us the first day) could not be persuaded to leave the tree. Many petitions were also put in by the others to be allowed to take the honey; but as expedition was my object I could not consent, yet the two lads still remained there till we were out of sight. I therefore rode back to bring them on, when I met Neddy advancing a few rods from the tree, and expostulating with Bill, who was still watching with his head up, making a dead point at the honey. I had no sooner begun to scold him for his loitering, than I found the whole party of

natives at my heels, begging most piteously not to leave the honey behind, and I was at length compelled to give way. As soon as permission was given, Bill began most furiously with his hatchet to cut notches in the bark of the tree, just large enough for the great toe to rest upon. The first was cut about the height of his breast; upon this he rested by the great toe of the right foot, while his left arm was wound round the body of the tree: the second was cut above his head, chiefly by the action of the wrist, with great adroitness, and then with the hatchet in his mouth and both arms round the tree, he placed the great toe of his left foot in the notch, exhibiting an astonishing stretch and pliability of limb.

In this manner did Wool Bill proceed for about three-fourths of the way up, when he suddenly descended without saying a word, and little Neddy quickly ascended in his steps, with his hatchet in his mouth. In a few minutes he also returned, and a third made the trial and did the same thing; this produced a great deal of clamour amongst them, and on my requesting an explanation, I was informed that they had all turned dizzy when they had got to the last notch. I suspected, however, that there was some superstition connected with it, and that fear had operated upon them when they came to the point where Bill had failed, but this I could not ascertain. A fine active fellow, who called himself Wallis, next came forward, and observed to me: "Top bit, massa; nebber mind, I get him." He was soon up to the last notch, and began cutting and striding away till he reached the limb where the honey was deposited, at the extremity of a hollow branch, which was too fragile to bear him. He appeared to be in the act of striding it, when I called out

that it would break with him. "No, no, massa," he answered, "no tumble Wallis, nebber," and the branch was soon cut off near the body of the tree, and fell with the honey upon the ground. A scramble now ensued, and the comb was all instantly in hand. It was brought to me immediately, without my asking for it, and without any previous concert amongst themselves. I took a small portion, as did my companion, Mr. Pennington; and as it had all been seized before Wallis could descend, I was curious to see how he would be treated in the final division of the spoil; this was soon settled, for he was immediately seen eating amongst them, and no disagreement whatever took place about it. I observed that the two boys were the objects of attention amongst all the men, as they received from them much more than fell to the share of any one else; and in many other cases I had observed their similar conduct towards children: many of the men who were not married adopted an orphan boy, of whom they were generally very fond; and children of both sexes who had lost their parents were uniformly adopted by those who had no families, and sometimes by those who had.

The honey was exceedingly well flavoured; but the cells being filled by the bees, rendered it difficult to suck the honey without taking the bee also into the mouth; these having no stings the natives eat them with impunity, as also the greater part of the comb.

After this feast we proceeded on for about eight or nine miles, when we came to a spot where there were ten or twelve gunyers, which did not appear to have been very recently inhabited. As this was a pleasant spot, with good water, and daylight was fast going, we pitched our

tent here. The nights being cold at this season, (an Australian April being like an English October,) the soldiers and white servants provided themselves with bark to sleep under, from the gunyers which stood on the spot. The natives also did the same, dividing themselves into two parties for sleeping; the one at my fire, and the other with the soldiers, at a short distance from me. The evening, however, was spent by them all around my fire in the most cheerful and joyous manner.

On the following morning the natives were stirring very early, and after having assisted the white men in rubbing and watering the horses, the boys and several of the young men amused themselves, while breakfast was preparing, with a sham fight.

Pisherman, who was the most facetious and clever lad of his age I had seen amongst the natives, provided himself with a piece of bark in the shape of a shield, with which he defended himself very adroitly against all their attacks, which were made by throwing long pointed sticks at him somewhat resembling spears, and pieces of hard iron-bark to represent their war weapon, the womerah. They threw these with great force and precision, causing them to strike the ground at the distance of ten or twelve yards from the spot whence they were delivered; they then bounded about three feet from the surface with great force. They are seldom thrown in a direct line, but have a bias given to them according to the shape of the bark. Pisherman dexterously caught both the pointed sticks and the whirling womerachs upon his shield, springing every now and then from the ground above the line which the missiles took, and sometimes doubling his

body like a harlequin, while he received the repeated applauses of the white men, who were not a little amused at the scene.

As soon as the breakfast was over, we started again in pursuit, and followed as Pisherman and Winkle directed. As we went on, the natives frequently gasconaded as to their determination to find the criminals, and what they would do when they should lay hold of them. We were a good deal hindered by several deep and wide streams which crossed our path, and which took their rise in an elevated chain of hills which we were fast approaching, extending from north to south, and which also intersected our line of march towards the north-east. The banks of these deep water-courses were every where more or less hidden by vines and brush-wood, through which we were often obliged to cut our way. The deep miry bottom of these streams would frequently not bear the weight of a pack-horse till he was unloaded, and the channel was partly filled up by broken limbs of trees, leafy brush wood, and bundles of long grass, all of which were brought to the spot by the natives with great alacrity.

The country was every where much broken; the forest was as usual without underwood, except near the streams; but it was every where heavily timbered, upon a thin soil of a whitish cast, bearing grass in greater abundance and of a better quality than is generally found in a country where so much timber exists. The trees consisted chiefly of forest-oak, also of a species of gum-tree with white bark, and a few apple-trees in the flats and hollows. In every respect it was well adapted for cattle and horses, and in most places for wether-sheep and auxiliary ewe stations, in seasons when water and grass should be scarce

in better pastures—it was what an agriculturist would call a useful country.

Towards the afternoon we began to ascend the range before mentioned, led on by Pisherman, who forgetting that the horses were not so expert at climbing a hill as he was, took us by the nearest route to the summit, which we reached with great difficulty, and not without some danger to the horses. From these hills we had a magnificent prospect. On the east was the river Myall, winding its course through a level country from north to south, and parallel with the coast. Further on to the east of this river was a sandy desert, and beyond it lay the wide extent of ocean. On the south lay the harbour of Port Stephens, but which a mountainous ridge intercepted from our view; and on the west the country was broken, while the more distant and elevated conical hills on Hunter's River were backed by the still more distant and lofty range of blue mountains. To the north and north-east the country was mountainous and seemed almost inaccessible; but the natives informed me it was much less so than it appeared, and that we should experience no difficulties in making our way through it. The trees which grew on the sides and tops of this elevated chain of hills were of the same description as those below, and the grass was nowhere more luxuriant in this quarter of the country than on their summits: this is frequently the case as regards the grass on the sides of hills, which face and are nearly adjoining the sea; and although there are districts of barren ranges which produce little or no herbage, yet even these gloomy and uninviting tracts of country are sometimes more thickly covered with trees than any other parts. The timber, however, which they bear, is gene-

rally useless, consisting chiefly of what are called forest-mahogany and blood-wood, which latter name is doubtless derived from the colour of its sap. At certain periods of the year copious exudations of it take place, which falling upon the ground at the bottom of the tree, present the appearance of some animal having been slaughtered there.

After taking an interesting survey of the surrounding country, we descended at the opposite side of the eminence, and travelled towards two extensive lakes, where the tribe we were in search of were said to reside. Their tracks on the long grass and in moist places were every now and then pointed out by the natives. We saw abundance of kangaroos, which were of course unmolested by us, excepting from an occasional fruitless chase by the natives; but the kangaroo-rats, which frequently jumped like rabbits out of the grass, afforded the greatest amusement to us all. These animals, which are nearly as large as rabbits, closely resemble the rat about the head, but their legs and their jump are like those of the kangaroo: they are exceedingly swift, and when pursued, always shelter themselves if they can in the hollow trees which lie scattered about the forest; but the natives being unable to dislodge them with their spears, cut a hole in the centre of the hollow and then easily force the animal out at one of the ends, when it rarely escapes its pursuers.

We took up our quarters in the evening, by a water-course near a good fording place. The horizon appeared overcast, and the natives, who are excellent judges of weather, predicted rain: they were, therefore, more than usually alert in stripping the neighbouring trees of their

bark, for protection from the rain and night chill. While doing this and providing wood for the fires, one party of the convict attendants were cleaning and providing for their horses, and the others arranging the baggage and preparing for dinner. In a short time the whole party was under cover, perfectly secured against the rain, which commenced soon after our arrival.

We proceeded towards the lakes the next morning. The country was thickly timbered for several miles, and the grass of inferior quality. We now and then came to tracks of white gritty soil bearing the grass-tree, from which plant the natives extract the wax-like gum with which they glue their implements. Their spears are also made of the smooth, straight stalks of this plant, which grows to the height of seven or eight feet, with a top like a bull-rush when in full blossom. The flower contains a considerable quantity of juice, which is sweet and very agreeable if taken without any of the unpleasant yellow farina. The natives, more especially children, are exceedingly fond of it, and constantly in search of it during the season. In this poor district I found some beautiful shrubs, and also the dwarf banksia, which, when in blossom, contained saccharine juices similar to the grass-plant. It is singular that these soils, which are too poor to produce either grain or grass, should generally be heavily stocked with plants whose flowers contain far more sweetness than those found in richer soils.

The wind, during the whole of this day, blew very hard, and the sky indicated rain. The natives foretold a "corbon" flood, and suggested that we had better return home to avoid it: my object, however, was to proceed to several extensive lakes, which were at no great

distance from us, to search for the criminals, and also to examine the country; I therefore hurried on in that direction. On a sudden I saw a smoke ascending at a short distance, as if from the fire of a native party. I was considerably in advance of my people; but my blacks having seen the smoke, almost immediately joined me. They were all agitation, and proposed to leave the white men behind while they softly approached towards the spot with me. This was arranged accordingly; but as we drew near we saw no other sign of natives than a fire and a row of gunyers. The weather, however, being gloomy, and rain appearing to be near at hand, I imagined that we were on the point of surprising a native tribe asleep in their huts, which my sable friends approached to examine with all the caution of a cat about to spring upon its prey: all they found was one poor solitary girl, who was sleeping soundly between two dogs in one of the gunyers, with a small fire at the mouth of the hut, and half a roasted kangaroo lying before the fire. She did not awake on our approach, and as I was desirous not to alarm her more than could be avoided, I desired one of the natives to awaken her gently. On opening her eyes she appeared astonished, and immediately covered her face with her hands, and crawled as far away as she could, believing, no doubt, that she was about to be sacrificed. At this moment Pisherman, who it will be remembered was a native of that part of the country, called out "tisser, (sister,) belonging a me massa," and called to her in his own language. She appeared to know him, and peeped through her fingers, answering him in a very low tone, as if still afraid to come forward: she was soon, however, made to understand that we were friends, and

she then came forward to the mouth of the gunyer, where she sat and conversed freely with her brother, but with no one else. Fisherman was soon at the kangaroo, which I objected to ; but he said his sister had given him permission, and also to share it with his companions. Enquiries were then made as to the tribe to which she belonged, and we were informed that they were out hunting kangaroos, and would not return till the evening. Fisherman said they were not the tribe to whom the offenders belonged. I believed this to be untrue, although I did not tell him so, and I was now convinced that I should not be allowed to come in contact with them. I resolved, however, to keep up the impression amongst them, that I should, and that I *would* find them, and to proceed on our journey with the same precautions as we had done ; for I considered the next best thing to be accomplished was to strike such terror into the minds of the natives as would prevent a recurrence of similar transactions. I certainly should have taken the offenders if I could ; but as I believed that a persevering search, (and threatenings,) would produce a proper effect, I was, under all the circumstances, as well pleased that we were not likely to apprehend them.

The place where we had found the woman was on the border of an extensive lake which communicated with the river Myall ; but it was too far above the influence of the tide for its waters to be salt.

A fleet of small bark-canoes, belonging to the natives, was lying moored to some mangrove-trees at the back of the encampment ; and in the centre of the lake were several small rocky and well-timbered islands, rising high above the water and covered with grass.

Before taking our departure from the encampment, I desired Pisherman to inform his sister that we should encamp about three miles further on the margin of the lake, and that if she and her husband would like to visit us, I should be glad to see them. I was anxious, through him, to impress the tribe with our formidable strength and determined purpose, and at the same time to show by my friendly invitation to one who was not supposed to be at all connected with the guilty parties, that punishment was intended only for those by whom it was deserved.

In the meeting between Pisherman and his sister there was no shaking of hands, or sign of pleasure on either side: notwithstanding this, he was very much pleased and animated when he announced his discovery to me, although he assumed a grave aspect the moment he turned to address her. I asked him why he did not laugh, and appear as much pleased in his manner to his sister, as he did to me when he had found her. His only reply was, "Black pellow never do."

When we had proceeded about a mile from the encampment, we heard the hunting shout of a native in the forest. Pisherman said that it was his sister's husband, and he would go in search of him. He did so immediately, and soon returned with the information that he was alone, and that the other members of the tribe were on the beach a long way off. He also said that his friend would join us before dark, and bring with him a kangaroo.

We proceeded about three miles further, when we encamped in a sheltered spot near the margin of the lake. By this time the rain had come on, and we were all wet through. We soon got under shelter by the assistance

of the natives. A dry and comfortable hut was quickly formed for the cook and his apparatus; while a fire was kindled against a dead tree which lay at the mouth of it. A large hollow tree, at no great distance from us, was selected by the natives for depositing their arms, and they erected a hut for themselves opposite the mouth of my tent. After this they collected a huge pile of dead wood, and made a fire large enough to accommodate all our party. We had not long been thus fixed, when a distant coo-oo was heard: it was immediately recognized as that of the native whom Pisherman had found, and answered accordingly. In a short time he appeared with a kangaroo on his shoulders, and his gin by his side. He stopped at about ten rods from the encampment, and threw down the kangaroo. His gin had brought with her a firebrand, which the natives continue to keep alive while travelling, and are thus always prepared to stop at any spot they choose. She immediately scraped a few leaves and some scattered pieces of dry bark together, and lighted a small fire, before which they both immediately squatted, while it was pouring with rain. One of our natives then said something to them in their own language, which being answered, he immediately went and took the kangaroo, but nothing further passed between them. I then asked why the visitors did not come to our fire: "By and bye, massa," was the answer. I urged them repeatedly upon the subject, and as often received the same answer, with the addition, that "Myall black pellow do so always." "But why," I said, "do they do so? why do they not come the same as white men, and sit down all together?" The answer was, with a very conceited smile, "Dat Myall pellow, you know, dat

come by and bye." After dinner was over, several of the natives went to the stranger, and one of them gave him a pipe. In a few minutes after this they left him, and he followed them to the fire: not so the gin, who remained shivering before a very small fire, which the rain would hardly allow her to keep alight. On seeing this, I wished my natives to ask her to accompany her husband, but could not induce them to do so: it was evidently contrary to their custom, and they would not break through it. All the answers I could get were, "No, no, massa, black gin nangry (sleep) dere."

Before, however, the husband quitted her, he had cut a single sheet of bark, which was placed on the ground near the fire: as soon as it was dark she crept under it, and as it preserved, in a certain degree, its circular shape, she was protected by it from the wet and cold.

During the night, the rain was so heavy as to wash my poor natives from their shed, in consequence of their having placed it rather upon a slope; for as soon as the ground became saturated, the wet ran in a stream under their bodies. They soon shifted their house to a drier spot, where they passed the remainder of the night more comfortably. On the following morning, it was still raining as heavily as ever, and as there was no appearance of its clearing up, we loaded our horses as usual, and proceeded on our journey, keeping the lake in sight nearly all the way. Our black visitors very wisely returned in the morning towards their own encampment, promising that they would see me again at Port Stephens.

We passed over some fine open hills and extensive cattle plots, and if the weather had been fine, it was a

country which would have afforded much enjoyment. The rain having continued twenty-four hours, I was compelled to give up the idea of returning across the country, in consequence of the impossibility of fording the numerous streams, which had caused us so much trouble on our way hither, and which had, by this time, swelled into rapid torrents. I was therefore obliged to shape my course in a circuitous direction towards the beach, under the guidance of Pisherman. In the evening we encamped again under torrents of rain. My poor blacks looked half drowned, and the whites no better; but the behaviour of both parties was admirable. It was exceedingly difficult now to find a spot sufficiently dry for our bivouac. In addition to all the former obligations I was under to the natives, they covered the bottom of my tent this evening with a carpet of tea-tree bark, which was soft as velvet, and kept me from the wet ground. This tree is a species of myrtle, whose bark grows in layers not much thicker than brown paper, which are easily taken from the tree without a hatchet; and the nearer the bark is to the wood the softer it is found. The natives sometimes make small baskets of it, but they use it by folding and tying it in a peculiar manner for drinking-vessels more frequently than for any thing else. Both the soldiers and the natives made use of it upon the present occasion, to protect the locks of their fire-arms from the wet: it assisted likewise in keeping our blankets and provisions dry.

Our situation had now become exceedingly uncomfortable: for although we could travel with wet clothes, still it was very desirable to dry them when taken off: this, however, could not now be done, for the rain was incessant, and no sign of a change appeared even on the fol-

lowing morning. Another day was therefore passed in travelling through water, for every flat through which we passed (and some were pretty extensive) was inundated two or three feet deep. Towards the afternoon our spirits were revived by the appearance of some blue sky, and a cessation from rain for half an hour, after which short interval we had again to encamp under fresh torrents of water. About eight o'clock, however, it cleared up, and we had the satisfaction of being able to dry ourselves before a good fire. There appeared to me to be no chance of finding the offenders we had come in search of; and my only object was now to reach the beach as quickly as possible. On the following morning, therefore, we left our encampment. The sun, which was bright when we started, soon became overcast, and we had again to encounter heavy and sometimes long-continued storms of rain, which lasted, at intervals, during the whole of our journey of nearly a fortnight.

Having gone round the western shores of the lake, we came in sight of another large piece of water, called Smith's Lake. Although there was no visible outlet from this extensive water to the sea, still it was salt, and the tide ebbed and flowed. This was afterwards accounted for by its being divided from the sea by a sand-bank only, through which the waters of the ocean percolated. The fresh and salt-water lakes were divided from each other by a narrow neck of land of about thirty rods; and from the sandy nature of the soil, it is reasonable to conclude that they were once united, and that formerly the salt-water lake on the north was immediately connected with the sea, forming, like Port Stephens, an outer and an inner harbour. The southern Myall Lake now commu-

nicates with Port Stephens harbour, and is navigable for boats to that place ; but from its situation, and other circumstances, it seems probable, that when the communication ceased between the two lakes, the waters of the southern one forced a narrow channel into the Myall River, and thus found their way to the sea through the harbour at Port Stephens, on the south instead of the northern passage, where they would have been discharged through Smith's Lake into the sea near Sugar-loaf Point, which lies about forty miles north of the entrance to Port Stephens harbour.

The distance from the neck of land to the sea is about six miles. The country consists of moderately-elevated hills, and small hollows, covered in every direction with white sand. Notwithstanding this, it is every where clothed with timber, and bearing occasionally tufts of long oat-grass, but these are so thinly scattered, as to render it nearly useless for grazing. The sand does not appear to lie very deep, and this, I imagine, is the cause of the timber flourishing in what would otherwise appear a desert.

As soon as we arrived at the beach, we saw by the foot-prints, that a considerable number of natives had passed since the tide had begun to ebb, and I immediately followed them towards Sugar-loaf Point on the north. On arriving at some green hills without timber by the side of the shore, one of our natives saw several blacks on their summits. I ordered Croseby immediately to make the sign of peace, upon which he gave his musket to another, and ran forward on the beach, waving his hand above his head, and shouting as loud as he could, stopping every now and then, pointing with his hand to the ground. As

soon as they found they had been observed they withdrew, and in a few minutes re-appeared. At length, a man on the top of the hill answered our signs, and soon after this several more appeared. By this time we were within hearing of them, and Croseby called to tell them who we were. He was answered in a loud and apparently angry harangue. On enquiring what his answer was, Croseby informed me that he said, "What business have you here? dis is not your place. What does white pellow do here? dere is no good in him; go away." I was going to make some remark to Croseby, when he said: "Top bit, dat murry coulor; I piola (speak) again; dat better by and bye." Some further parley took place between them, which at length ended in a friendly invitation to us to ascend the hill, which I soon did, with Mr. Pennington and several of our natives. About ten of the strangers, with several women and children, then made their appearance, without spears or any signs of hostility. We were very near the spot where the timber-cutters had been, and the party with whom we were then talking were the same who had been at war with them. They appeared at first very shy and unwilling to shake hands with me, but we were soon upon more easy terms. I distributed tobacco, pipes, and several tomahawks amongst them, and in return they gave us fish. They seemed to know who I was, and where I had come from; and Croseby informed me that they had heard of "Corbon Massa good while ago." I took care to inform them I had come in search of a native, whom I wished to punish for spearing a white man without any provocation; and that some white men were going to be hanged at Port Stephens for drowning little Tommy, &c. I invited them to Port Stephens, which our natives repre-

sented to them as affording all sorts of good things, and where Corbon Massa would treat them kindly. When we took our departure, several of them accompanied us a considerable distance on the beach, and did not leave us until the day was about to close.

Not long after their departure we were looking for a spot to bivouac upon near the shore, when one of our natives came running towards me, to announce the approach of several strange natives from the south. I immediately went to meet them, taking with me several of our own blacks. Fisherman, although he had not belonged to their tribe, knew them slightly, and as they also recollected him, we had no difficulty in approaching them. We shook hands and were friends in an instant, and as they were also going to pass the night near the spot where we met them, they proposed to conduct us to it, and to remain there with us. I agreed to this at once, and in ten minutes they took us to a hollow between two low sandy hills, which were covered with flowering shrubs, and ivy-like vines running on the ground, and peculiar to that kind of country near the sea. Here they showed us a spring of pure water, which from the pieces of tea-tree bark that lay near the spring, and the marks of fires, appeared to be the common place of resort for the natives when travelling on or near to the beach, where fresh water is in general very scarce. The afternoon proving fine, and the country in which we encamped being dry, we enjoyed ourselves exceedingly. The stranger natives however made a fire at a short distance from ours, and slept around it by themselves. In the morning our friends left us, on their way to Sugar-loaf Point, appearing well pleased with their treatment.

As we were proceeding this day on the beach towards home, our natives were anxiously looking out for fish, which abound in shallow water, and especially a species called mullet, about the size of a mackarel, which are frequently brought for a moment in sight when the waves break upon the beach. The quick eyes of the natives enable them to take this opportunity of spearing them, which they do with a dexterity scarcely credible. There were several amongst our party who had their spears with them; and Wallis, who was a tall, active fellow, pursued the sport in a manner which astonished me. As the day was rough, and the tide at the same time flowing, the billows rolled high and broke heavily upon the beach. Wallis ran in upon the retreating water as far as he could, when he threw his spear with the quickness of lightning at a fish. Before he had time to return, or even to stoop to recover his spear, the next wave took him with such tremendous force as made me shudder for his safety; he however preserved his upright position in the midst of the wave, his dark hair being scarcely visible above the white foam. On its retreat he was left upon his legs, and the next instant was seen running and laughing before the succeeding billow, which closely chased him towards his companions on the beach; while one of them rushing forward at the precise moment, and seizing the spear and the fish, which the wave had also thrown back, brought them both ashore, holding them up to me with shouts of pleasure. Wallis repeated this several times, but not always with equal success. I was as much amused as astonished at what I saw, and on their observing this, the sport was eagerly prolonged.

We were overtaken during the morning by several

heavy storms, and feeling anxious to reach home as soon as possible, we proceeded across the sandy desert described in the early part of this journey. My intention was to ford the river Myall at a point where the natives informed me it was practicable; but on arriving there I found the rain had increased the water to such an extent as rendered the attempt dangerous. It being impossible to reach Port Stephens with our horses without crossing this river, it became necessary either to wait till the water subsided, or to send to the establishment for a boat.

Two of the natives, Corbon Bill and Corbon Wickie, volunteered to deliver a letter the same evening, and to be at an appointed spot with a boat by ten o'clock the following morning. I had no idea they would perform this within the time, although I felt assured it would be done as soon as practicable, and on my expressing myself to that effect, Corbon Bill answered, with a good-natured smile, "Nebber mind, you gib it letter, massa, dat go plenty toon to-night—den take it boat when urokah jump up (sun rises) to-morrow."

The distance by land was about fourteen miles, it was then late in the afternoon, and the extent of their morning journey by water was nearly twenty miles, with the tide against them. As soon as it was settled that they were to go, and the note was written, Corbon Bill tied it up in his hair, which was worn as I have before described; they then pulled off their trousers, which they fastened on the top of their heads, and plunged into the water like a couple of ducks. They were soon on the opposite bank, and without stopping to put on their trousers, they waved their hands to their companions, and were out of sight in an instant. About midway on their route between the river

and Port Stephens lay one of the Company's cattle stations; here they stopped and took tea with the principal stockman, and travelled the rest of their journey in the dark, a thing quite unusual with them, and which the natives will not generally do on any account, from the fear of Coen, their evil spirit. Their pride, however, was engaged in the present performance.

The boat, with our two friends in it, was in sight on the following morning before we had finished our breakfast. They were accompanied by several natives and three white men. The horses and the whole party were soon passed over, the greater part of the natives were sent home by the boat, and we all dined the same day at Port Stephens.

As I was riding this day with Mr. Pennington, considerably in advance of my party, a black woman suddenly appeared before us with a child on her shoulders; she ran off like a hare; I called to her to stop, and immediately put my horse at a sharp gallop to overtake her, which as the forest was open I had no difficulty in doing. When she found herself unable to get away, she screamed as if she expected to be murdered. I then pulled up, and again called to her, wishing to show that although I could overtake her, still I had no intentions to hurt her; she still however ran on, not choosing to trust me. At length I overtook her, when she sunk half crouching upon the ground, and looked up to me as if to implore my forbearance, while the poor child clung fast to its mother, set its large dark eyes upon me, and suddenly burst into a loud cry. I offered the woman biscuit and tobacco, which I saw made some impression upon her, though she refused them, and made an attempt

to run off again. I would not, however, allow her to leave me with an unfavourable impression, and again pressed the biscuit and tobacco upon her, making at the same time every friendly sign in my power. She at length accepted the tobacco, and her alarm appeared gradually to subside; after which she began talking aloud, as if to some of her tribe at a distance, and at the end of the speech I heard the words "white pellow;" this was succeeded by a second harangue, which ended as before. In answer to this I heard a voice from a bush or jungle at the foot of a hill at a distance in front of us. By this time our party came within sight, but as I was afraid of creating fresh alarm, they were prevented from coming any further. I at length succeeded in prevailing upon the stranger to take some biscuit; and as she appeared to have recovered from her alarm, she still carried on a loud conversation with her friends in the bush, who I found by their voices were gradually drawing towards us; by and bye I saw one man peeping from behind a tree, and then a second, when I called to them and waved my hand above my head in token of peace. Upon this several men and three or four boys came out, and after depositing their spears against a tree, they all advanced without any hesitation.

The men shook hands with me upon my making the advance, and received with much cordiality some tobacco which I offered to them. While this was going on I felt a slight pull at my stirrup-iron, and on turning round, a fine little fellow about six years old looked up in my face, and observed, "I know you, massa,—I been tee you Port Tebid good while ago." "Well," I said, "name me then, if you know me;" to which he replied with an arch

smile, "Corbon Massa." I asked him whether he liked Port Stephens. "Yes," he said, "murry plenty patter always; plenty black pellowes go dere by and bye." As soon as we had got quite familiar, I ordered my whole party up, and in addition to the tobacco and biscuits I supplied the strangers with several short pipes, from the wreck of those which had served our party during the journey, and of which our new friends had long been taught the use by the timber-cutters; and having allowed sufficient time for conversation between the strangers and our own natives, who were slightly known to each other, we separated upon terms which subsequently brought the former as friendly visitors to Port Stephens, where I saw them many times afterwards.

As soon as it was in my power I wrote to the governor the result of my expedition, and received his thanks for my exertions, with the announcement that the lives of the men left in custody had been spared. Their punishment had been commuted for perpetual banishment to Norfolk Island. On their passage however to that place, in company with other criminals, they mutinied, and took possession of the ship, which they carried into a port in New Zealand, for the purpose of obtaining such a supply of water as would enable them to reach the South American coast. The conduct of the parties attracted the suspicions of the commander of a South Sea whaler, then lying in the harbour, who at once took possession of the vessel, and brought her back to Sydney; when it appearing that one of the criminals who was to have been executed at Port Stephens, had taken an active part in the mutiny, he was tried and executed at Sydney. I understood that his companions in the murder were

also subsequently executed for fresh crimes, so that the mercy which the governor had previously extended to them was of no avail.

The age of the person executed at Sydney did not, I think, exceed twenty. He was, I understand, very penitent, and confessed the murder of the black boy, with all its attendant circumstances.

CHAPTER VII.

OBSERVATIONS ON, AND ANECDOTES OF, THE NATIVES.

ON our return to Port Stephens from our journey, the natives were joyfully received by their companions, who, I have no doubt, were well pleased that we had not caught the offenders, whose friends might in their turn have retaliated upon them severely. Having done my best to take them, I own I also was as well satisfied that I had not succeeded, being convinced that such an impression was produced as would prevent a recurrence of the crime; and having, moreover, the satisfaction of finding on my return that the wounded man was pronounced out of danger, and recovering from the effects of his wound.

The affairs of the station had during my absence proceeded with great regularity under the charge of my nephew. The uneasiness occasioned by previous events had soon subsided, and was quickly succeeded by the same good feelings which had before subsisted between the black and white inhabitants of the place.

Having shown the constancy and fidelity of the natives during the several journeys I have related, and placed

their characters in such points of view as I hope will shield them from unmerited imputations, I shall proceed to relate some further anecdotes which came within my knowledge, and which will enable others to draw their own conclusions with reference to this portion of our fellow-creatures, about whom so much has been said, and so little apparently understood.

Previous to our settling at Port Stephens there had been, as I have before related, several parties of timbercutters above the navigable parts of the rivers. One of these parties had been employed up the river Karuah, and had given cause of offence to the natives, in the same manner as had been done up the river Myall. The consequences were, that a white man, working in a saw-pit, had been speared by a native, and immediately expired, and several of the natives were afterwards shot at and wounded, and probably some of them killed.

The native who appeared to have the greatest influence amongst the tribe had been wounded in the thigh by a musket-ball, and was represented, both amongst the blacks and the whites at Port Stephens, as a ferocious and determined character, resolved to retaliate upon his white enemies wherever he found them. In the immediate vicinity of his haunts it was convenient for me to establish a station of some importance, and I confess I was somewhat uneasy on account of the shepherds, who by their situations and employments were necessarily exposed to his hostility. I endeavoured, therefore, by every means in my power to obtain an interview with this man, but a considerable period elapsed before I could effect this; several of his tribe had come to that settlement, (which was about twenty-two miles from the harbour,) and con-

tinued to visit it upon the most friendly terms; but Dawly, for that was his name, could not be prevailed upon to approach it. He was described to me as being lame, from the wound he had received, and as being inimical to all white men. I sent him repeated messages by individuals of his tribe that I wished him to "*set down*" with me, and that I would treat him the same as I did those who already were there; but that if he touched one of the white men, I should take him and have him punished. At length I was informed by one of his tribe, who, together with his family, was domesticated at this establishment, that Dawly had come down from the hills to see me, and was then waiting at some distance in the forest behind the overseer's hut. I immediately went out, and saw him standing alone, with a long spear in his hand, and a piece of tea-tree bark attached to his belt around his loins, and hanging down like a short apron, to cover his wound, which it seems had never healed. As I was unarmed, and did not relish his spear, I motioned to him to put it down and to advance towards me. This was instantly done, when we met and shook hands. I then gave him a pipe and tobacco and some bread, with which I had provided myself on purpose. I had never before seen a native so commanding in his deportment, and of so determined an aspect as this personage. His thick matted hair hung like a mop nearly to his shoulders, and his black bushy beard and mustachios on his dusky copper-coloured skin added a degree of fierceness to a countenance which bespoke all the qualities attributed to him. He was rather tall and well made, apparently about thirty years of age, and could only speak a few words of broken English; his object in introducing himself to me seemed to be

more a matter of curiosity than any thing else, and he said no more than could be avoided upon the occasion, nor could I persuade him to advance with me to the hut, or even one step beyond the place of our interview. I desired the native who had domesticated himself on the establishment to inform Dawly that he would be always received there, and that I would give him tobacco, clothes, and food, whenever he chose to come.

I was told by Bry, "Dawly come again by and bye, dat go in bush now. Plenty black pellow belonging to Dawly behind corbon hill;" pointing at the same time to a range of mountains opposite to us, behind which the tribe was encamped.

Our interview lasted only about ten minutes, when he took his departure, after shaking hands with me. The caution with which he made his retreat, showed that his mind was not exactly at ease, and that he imagined the possibility of some retaliation for the offences which it was supposed he had formerly committed. His body, as far as I could see him, was carefully shielded as he walked by the trees, which he kept in a line behind him, casting his eye frequently back, as if to ascertain that his position was a safe one. Although he was accused of having speared the white man, there was no person who could identify him; and as it was clearly the best policy to conciliate him, and to prevent future mischief, I spared no pains to accomplish my ends.

The native Bry, who had attached himself to the overseer, had been residing several months on the establishment with his wife and four or five children, the eldest of whom was a daughter, Mary, apparently about twelve years old. I discovered in the end, that one of the

reasons for this family remaining so constantly with us was, that the daughter might be protected against Dawly, who wished to carry her off, and that he had been foiled in his attempt by her removal from his presence. As soon as I heard of it I told Bry that I would not allow of such a proceeding, and desired him to inform Dawly, that if he attempted to carry her away, I should call him to a severe account for it. Bry, believing that my message would be a sufficient protection, conveyed it to Dawly, and took his family to visit his tribe; when Dawly, thinking much less of my authority than Bry imagined, made an attempt to carry off Miss Mary, but on her threatening that she would tell corbon massa where to find him, and her resistance being more than usually resolute, he in the violence of his rage threw her into the fire. Poor Bry immediately returned with his family to his white friends, and brought with him his poor daughter, who was burned in the most shocking manner from her neck to her hip. She however ultimately recovered, and Bry having delivered a threatening message from me to Dawly, afterwards informed me that the latter promised not to trouble Mary again, provided I would not molest him.

This was the only instance during my residence at Port Stephens in which I failed to conciliate every native with whom I came in contact in the neighbourhood of the various establishments on the grant. It was plain that Dawly never could be thoroughly reconciled after the wound he had received; and from the effects of which, according to the accounts of the natives, he was still daily smarting: he never allowed me to see him again.

Poor Bry was one of the most tractable and kind-hearted creatures I ever saw, and exceedingly useful in con-

veying messages and letters from that establishment to the port. The overseer, who was very partial to him, always lent him a coat and a horse-pistol, which Bry bargained for upon these occasions, and he wore the coat without any other clothes, or having any covering on his head. It was a large fustian frock-coat, which reached nearly down to Bry's insteps, with two large flap-pockets, in one of which he carried the pistol, with the butt-end sticking out, and in the other his bread, pipe and tobacco. In the inside breast-pocket the letter was safely deposited, wrapped in a piece of paper, and was delivered with the utmost care and punctuality. When I was at home he always came to me with a smile of pleasure, and as soon as he had delivered his letter and told me his news, he took in return an order upon the store for his supper and travelling provisions for the following day, on the morning of which he never failed to make his appearance for an answer, which he conveyed back in the same manner. It was of no use to attempt to send him back without a letter; he would not move without one, whether an answer was required or not; a piece of paper, however, in the form of a letter, was the same thing. To take a letter for corbon massa was a mission which gave the natives consequence with each other, and if the bearer of dispatches met any other natives on his journey, no attempt was ever made to divert him from his course.

There was also an interesting boy, about twelve years old, of an active disposition and of singularly lively habits, residing at this establishment, and belonging to Bry's tribe. He was an orphan, and his manners and habits led us to call him Flibberty Gibbet, which the natives shortened into "Plibberty." He generally held himself

in readiness to ride express from one station to another, on a small Timour pony, which was kept on purpose for him.

The sight of this little fellow when equipped for his journey was always gratifying to me. The shining black of his skin contrasted well with his white trousers; his long and silky hair was tied up to a point; and a brown paper parcel, or leathern post-bag, was usually suspended under his arm by a strap or string from his shoulder. His figure was slender, and tall for his age; he sat his pony extremely well, the ball of his naked foot resting lightly upon the stirrup. I fell in with him one day in the forest upon one of these expeditions. I saw him at some distance off, with a parcel slung under his arm, winding amongst the trees at full gallop; as he approached and recognized me, his animated countenance bespoke the highest delight, nor was I less pleased than himself when I found that he was the bearer of some letters for which I had been anxiously looking. His little hand on our meeting was instantly stretched towards me for the friendly shake, and while his panting palfry, with its ears laid back, stood tossing up its head in discourse with my horse, the happy little Plibberty unburdened himself of his parcel with as much consequence as if he had been an envoy extraordinary to the first of potentates; yet with all this, he was not always to be found when wanted, being unable entirely to forsake his early habits, his old friends of the forest, or his former haunts. The pleasure of climbing the highest trees to obtain the opossum or the wild honey had not lost its charm; nor will this be surprising to any of my readers who may remember the pleasure derived in the days of their boyhood from a

squirrel hunt in the woods during the Christmas holidays, or the sly creepings and poppings from behind the black-thorn hedge, at a flock of fieldfares or wood-pigeons pecking the withered blades from the frozen turnips. If the recollections of these winter pastimes, or of the gathering of the wild nuts and blackberries of autumn, can yield any pleasure, let it be remembered that my sable little Mercury passed his whole boyhood in similar pursuits, and in fact knew no other enjoyments.

Nature prompts all to the gratification of their animal propensities: to those happily born in civilized life the charms of social intercourse, and the gratifying communion of intellect, soon fix their hold on the mind; while the untutored savage has no source of enjoyment open to him save the uncontrolled exercise of his liberty, and the unchecked pursuit of selfish pleasures. Can any rational being expect that this freedom from restraint and drudgery will be willingly resigned without adequate compensation?

On the first occupation of a new country, civilized men have too frequently looked only to the easiest mode of securing the present services of the poor natives, by the temptation of ardent spirits, which have never failed to degrade uncivilized beings into half-civilized brutes.

The occupations and *difficulties* of the first settlers are not the most favourable either to the developement or the exercise of humane feelings. Every object is eagerly seized which can in any way minister to their artificial wants; and without reference to ultimate consequences. The aborigines are from this cause too often used and abused with as little regard as if they were animals of an-

other species, and are abandoned with no more concern when they can no longer be made useful.

Upon one occasion, when I was going to Sydney, M'Quarie and a lad named Corribah petitioned to accompany me. Their request was granted, and on our voyage there I pointed out to them the character of the drunken and celebrated King Bungaree, and cautioned them to beware of him and his black associates.

The morning after we landed, I received a visit from his sable Majesty, who had on an old military cocked hat, and an old black suit of clothes. "Your tarben, tir," was his salutation; he then said he had understood two of my men had arrived with me from Port Stephens—that he always wished to see all black people who came to Sydney—and that if I would allow them to go with him, he would show them Sydney, and desire his men to take good care of them. I immediately introduced my two attendants to the old king, and told them they might go with him if they wished it for a few hours. They looked at him with much curiosity and apparent dislike, and declined the acquaintance; but Bungaree at length prevailed upon them to accompany him, and on his departure he said to me, "Lend me one dollar, sir, if you please." "No, Mr. Bungaree," I said, "I shall do no such thing; I see you want to make my men drunk, and if you do I shall not allow you to see any more of them, nor shall I ever take them with me to Sydney again." Bungaree assured me that he would not even ask them to drink, and as he had no money I could easily understand his intended forbearance. A short time after they had left me I saw the two Port Stephens' blacks in the street staring in amazement at a person riding in a gig,—a spectacle

they had never before witnessed. Bungaree however had left them, and they soon returned to the house. Their sleeping-place was the hayloft, outside of which was a landing-place, overlooking the shipping in the harbour. This offered them so much enjoyment, that they stood there the greater part of the time they remained in Sydney, and I sometimes found them asleep on the spot. An opportunity occurred of sending them home after they had spent three or four days in Sydney, and on my proposing it to them, they agreed to it with much pleasure, and returned apparently satiated with the monotony of the scene. "Dere were no corbon trees," M'Quarie said, "and no kangaroo, and too much white pellow all about." In fact, the moment the novelty ceased they were out of their element, and longed again for the enjoyment of the canoe or the spear, and the unrestrained society of their sable friends at home.

Upon another occasion Wallis accompanied me to Sydney, and as I saw no opportunity of sending him back within a few days, I sent him to the Company's farm at Retreat, promising to follow him the succeeding day, but business unexpectedly prevented my doing so. From the time of his arrival he could not be persuaded to quit the verandah in front of the house, where he watched with unceasing anxiety for my coming, till at last he became so uneasy that the servant thought it better to send him back to me at Sydney, where he met me again with the greatest delight. He afterwards accompanied me back to Port Stephens, apparently with similar feelings to those of M'Quarie and Corribah. They had none of them been practised in drunkenness, and as they knew it would excite my extreme displeasure, they were

not drawn into temptation at Sydney, which affording them no enjoyments of any other kind after the novelty ceased, left in them no desire to prolong their stay.

In the former part of this work I mentioned the two native sailors, Croseby and Sinbad, who had attached themselves to the little schooner Balberook. Croseby, although an excellent fellow, could not resist the accursed spirits when offered to him. On one occasion, when I was in Sydney, he arrived there as a passenger on board one of the Company's vessels. I desired him to sleep in the hay-loft belonging to the Company's house, and cautioned him not to get drunk. Near the corner of the house, which was close to one of the coves in the harbour, a sentry was placed to prevent smuggling; and poor Croseby, forgetting the injunction I had laid upon him, had returned home in a state of intoxication and insulted the sentry, who being aware to whom he belonged, pushed him under the window of the room in which I was writing. The servant of the house went out to assist him in, and after a good deal of struggling and noise, Mr. Croseby was forced into the passage of the house, where he became still more obstreperous, and made the most violent and determined resistance to the attempts to lead him through the passage to the hay-loft. In the midst of the bustle I made my appearance, and on calling out to him in a severe tone, and shaking him at the same time by the collar, he drawled out, in the most piteous tones and supplicating-manner, "Oh, my massa, my massa, my massa!" which he repeated the whole of the way to the stable, to which he was instantly marched, without the slightest attempt at resistance, and where he quietly laid himself down to sleep.

The origin of the influence which I had thus obtained over the natives is easily explained. I was placed in a situation in which the power of bestowing and withholding was of necessity very extensive. I never imposed any restraints upon them that were not essential to our mutual protection and well-being, previously teaching them to distinguish between right and wrong, as understood in civilized society. I left them at liberty to associate with us, subject to responsibility for their own actions; and when our regulations were no longer agreeable to their habits, they were free to depart, knowing, from experience, that the hand of friendship would always be held out to them whenever their pleasure or their convenience might lead them to return. Thus they were always at their ease with us; and they soon became perfectly assured, that so long as they offended no one, none would be allowed to offend them with impunity. It was always with me a pleasing and an important duty to conciliate and to do them strict justice; and while I caused my authority to be respected when necessary, I took infinite pains to ingratiate myself with them upon all proper occasions. I danced and sang with them, and entered into all their other sports and gambols as an applauding spectator; I accompanied them to their fights; gave names to their children; conferred upon them offices and badges of distinction; and supplied them with muskets and ammunition, with which to pursue their sports. I gave them food in return for their services, and a hearty welcome wherever and whenever I met them. In return for all this, I was treated as one belonging to and almost necessary to them. I was known and talked of by them far and near, and designated as *bingeye*, (brother,) from

whom much had been received, and much was still expected. Every person who knows any thing of human nature, must be aware that man, in his wild state, is not to be conciliated, or tamed into respectfulness of demeanour and usefulness of conduct, by other than similar means to these.

After I had been about twelve months in the colony, I was travelling overland from Sydney to Port Stephens, and near one of my bivouacs discovered a native and his gin, neither of them exceeding twenty years of age, lying before a small fire in the forest. On approaching them, I found the female was unwell, which sufficiently accounted for their being there alone. She was writhing under acute pain in the abdomen, accompanied by cough and a considerable degree of fever. The husband evinced much concern at the situation of his gin; and the mere circumstance of his remaining with her, away from the rest of the tribe, was a sufficient proof to me that he was not without feeling. After I had felt her pulse, and looked at her tongue, he observed to me with an anxious countenance, "Dat boy, (die,) I bleve, massa." I told him I hoped she would not, as I would endeavour to make her well; and that I would, in a short time, give her something for that purpose. As soon as practicable, I gave her some medicine and a pannican of warm tea, and repeated the latter before I retired to rest. During the paroxysms of pain, I saw the husband take her up in his arms several times and change her position, and upon one occasion he placed her across his lap, with his eyes turned towards me, strongly expressive of his concern for her. Early in the morning I paid them a visit, and had the satisfaction to find her much relieved by the medi-

cine. I then administered a second dose, and sent her more tea, and before I quitted them she was able to talk to me, and to smile when I was about to take my leave. From that period I heard no more of them till travelling fifteen months afterwards in the same quarter, subsequent to my leaving Port Stephens, when I fell in with a tribe of natives sitting around a fire. Not doubting that I should be known by some of them, I immediately rode up, but saw no one that I was able to recognize. Presently, however, a man rose from amongst them, and placed himself in a careless manner in front of my horse, smiling, but without saying any thing. His look, however, convinced me that I was known to him. In the language common upon such occasions, I said, "Name you." He answered, "I know you, good while ago. Corbon Massa, belonging to Port Tebid." When the words Corbon Massa and Port Stephens were pronounced, a woman at the fire called out in a loud tone, "Murry tick (very sick) in bush good while ago." Although I had entirely forgotten the persons of my old acquaintances, I had not forgotten the circumstance alluded to; and as soon as I appeared to recollect it, and held out my hand to the man, his countenance beamed with pleasure, and as far as I could judge, he appeared proud of my acquaintance. The wife also came forward and shook hands with me, and on my speaking of our former meeting, they both appeared much pleased at the recollection. After sending my name through their camp, where it appeared to be well known, I was applied to for tobacco, and having given them all I possessed, was then asked a variety of questions; where I had come from? where I was going? where I had nangried (slept)

last night? where I intended to nangry this night? and when I should return? &c. This meeting was to my mind one of the most gratifying incidents which had occurred to me during my intercourse with the poor natives. I felt, what I had no means till then of ascertaining, that I had probably saved the life of a fellow-creature, who was then enjoying herself with her fellow-beings, and whose husband had also afforded the most ample proofs upon the former and the present occasion, that he was not a brute; and that this circumstance had also secured to me (had there been any danger) a safe passport amongst them. As I was provided with my tent at this time, I should have pitched it on this spot, and remained there during the night, but I could not afford the time, and we therefore parted with mutual good feelings.

Having one day occasion to visit a station on the grant nearly twenty miles off, I ordered my servant to be ready with a pack-horse and tent by a certain hour. The natives were gone, I knew not where, to settle some differences which had occurred between them, and one of the tribes on the Myall river. As I never liked to travel without some of them, I was obliged to have recourse to a boy, who called himself Little Mick, and who had been left at home as Wool Bill's substitute in the kitchen. We were rather late in starting, and being overtaken by the dark, we lost our road. I depended upon Mick to put us right again, but then first discovered that he was not acquainted with that part of the country, nor with the spot which we wanted to reach, and was therefore unable to help us out of our difficulty. We wandered for a considerable time, but my own knowledge of the hills kept us at no great distance from the track we had lost. By

and bye Little Mick made a sudden stop, and with a sharp, quick voice, called out, "Alah! blat pellow!" (black fellow.) I supposed he must have smelt them, for I could neither see nor hear any thing. "I hear him, massa," he said, turning up his ear; "plenty all about." "Come along then, Mick," I said; "they are Port Stephens' blacks, no doubt." "Don't know, massa," he replied, and crept on with great caution, turning his head on one side every now and then to listen. It was an interesting sight to see the prudence and extreme animation of the little creature at this moment. In about ten minutes we advanced, guided entirely by Mick, to within sight of their fires, which appeared in the distance precisely similar to the lamps of a town, when approaching it after dark. It was plain, by the number of the lights, that a *very* large body of natives was there, and I had no doubt that they were my own people; but the cautious cunning of Mick led him not to feel quite so sure of this: they *might* be the enemy, he thought, and with the bare possibility of this on his mind, nothing could persuade him to advance a step till he had satisfied himself, by giving the usual coo-oo-ee. This being sufficient to alarm the whole camp, he received no answer until he made a second call, which was answered by a single voice, and with an interrogatory as to who he was. Mick recognized the voice in an instant, and called out, "Come on, massa, come on; belonging to Dimmy Bungaree: you hear him?" After we had got within twenty yards of the camp, Mick called out, "Corbon Massa." This was instantly repeated from one end of the line to the other, like a running fire, and succeeded by a general and confused chatter in all quarters of the camp, with

"Corbon Massa, Corbon Massa," continually recurring in my ears. I stopped where I was for a few minutes, listening to what was going on, and it was with no little pleasure that I did so. On a sudden I was met by three or four men with flaming torches of dried bark, at the near approach of which my horse snorted, wheeled round, and was off with me into the forest in an instant. As soon as I had recovered him, I saw a host of them running towards me with lights of the same description. I called out to them not to approach, to which they immediately attended; when Jemmy Bungaree and Wool Bill advanced without the lights, the former laughing aloud in a shrill tone, more like the neighings of a horse than any thing else to which I can compare it.

"What for corse jarret (afraid) massa," he said, "gibit me bridle;" and seeing him perfectly quiet then, (for they are generally much frightened at the pranks of a horse,) he immediately seized hold near the bit of the bridle on one side, and Wool Bill on the other, and led him, in spite of me, to the camp, where numbers, both of men and women surrounded me, some of them thrusting their hands through the crowd, and bawling out their own names, that they might not be overlooked, while the skirts of my coat were pulled by the children and the old women, who had pushed through to acknowledge me. Of men, women, and children, there were not less than one hundred and fifty assembled here, being within a mile and a half of the spot where their opponents were also encamped. If I had wanted any testimonies of the manner in which I had established myself in the minds of these harmless and interesting people, I had seen enough this evening to satisfy me. This encampment was only

about half a mile from the spot where I intended to pitch my tent. As soon as they saw my intentions to depart, and had invited me to be present at the fight on the morrow, five or six of them re-lighted their torches and preceded me, unasked, to the place where I was going, and proposed to "nangry" by my fire; this was of course agreed to, and it was not long before they illuminated the neighbourhood of that spot by a fire sufficient to boil a large cauldron. My friends then took tea with me, and talked of the approaching conflict with as much interest as if the fate of nations had depended upon it. A hint had unintentionally fallen from them, that the intended fight had arisen in consequence of the spearing of the shepherd by the Myall natives, whom we had pursued; but whether the Myall natives had felt themselves offended at the Port Stephens blacks for their interference, or whether the latter had called them to account for the act that had been committed, I could not learn. I endeavoured by every means in my power to ascertain this, but they studiously avoided any explanation, from which I inferred that they had been called upon by the Myall tribes, and were afraid or ashamed to acknowledge it to me. I was asked to lend them muskets for their defence against the other party; but this I instantly declined, assuring them that if they murdered each other I should send them to prison and have them hanged. The subject of the muskets, however, was renewed several times, with the most earnest petitions, assuring me that they would not use them; but that they apprehended the numbers of their opponents would greatly exceed theirs, and that the sight of fire-arms would tend to keep them from being overwhelmed. I felt this reasoning to be very good, and

provided I could depend upon their promises, saw that the muskets would probably prevent rather than occasion mischief, because my friends being the weaker party, and knowing that they must not use the muskets, would make no general attack, while the opposite side would be deterred from it by the fear of them. I soon, however, decided the question; for although I could place the utmost reliance upon these natives on common occasions, yet I could not say to what length they would go when their passions became inflamed, and therefore gave them muskets without ammunition, and informed them that I should take some cartridges in my pocket and allow them to be used only in case of need.

On the following morning my friends increased in numbers around my fire, and urged me not to delay joining them longer than I could avoid, as their friends were waiting for me at the camp, and would not go till I was ready. I had, however, some indispensable business to transact with the overseer of the station near to whose hut I had pitched my tent, and could not go so soon as they wished me. Messenger after messenger was dispatched to me during this delay, urging me to make haste. At length I left my tent on horseback in company with my friends, several of whom had muskets which had been supplied from the overseer of the station. On arriving at the camp, I found the greater part of the women and children had left it, while the warriors were waiting for me. They had painted their bodies with red and white stripes, similar to what I have before described when they were dressed for their corrobories or dances; their hair had been untied and hung around their heads, which were stuck all over with small feathers of various

colours from parrots and cockatoos, procured for this occasion. Around their loins was the opossum belt, in one side of which they had placed their waddies, with which they meant to break the heads of their opponents, and on the other was the bomering or stick, with which they throw their spears; each had a long spear in his hand, while several carried bundles of them, and two or three had only shields, which were whitened with pipe-clay and quartered with red-ochre. Thus attired they received me shouting and capering, while several advanced in front of me, dancing with their corrobory motion, and shaking their garnished mops at me, as if inviting me to admire and applaud them.

Their bushy heads ill corresponded with their lank bodies and stick-like arms and legs, the latter of which ending with broad and muscular feet, were as disproportionate to those parts of the body as their embellished heads had now become. The standard of beauty in their minds and mine was very different; and although I saw nothing but ugly disproportions, amounting almost to deformities, the whole affair was exceedingly amusing, and I started with them, accompanied by the principal shepherd, Barnes, to the scene of contest, with feelings of deep interest as to the issue. As soon as we began to move on, the whole party, with their spears erect, like halberts, passed me in close order at full trot, making the earth sound by their heavy tramps, and rending the air with their war yells.

Having proceeded thus for about thirty yards, they suddenly stopped and huddled together in a compact body, making a sort of grunting noise, and stamping heavily upon the ground, till a single war yell

was given from one of the party, which produced instant silence ; they then trotted off again as they had done before, repeating the ceremonies until they reached the place selected for meeting their opponents, which was in a hollow about a hundred and fifty yards wide, surrounded by low, sloping hills, and with a small stream through the centre.

On the opposite side to that on which we descended, were seated their opponents, in family groups of men, women, and children: they all appeared perfectly unconcerned at the yells and flourishes of our party. We also found, on our side of the hill, the women and children that had preceded us, and a few of our men sitting in similar family groups waiting for us. They appeared to have been under no fear of any unfair attack from the opposite party in our absence; and the circumstance of their having gone there unprotected before us, proved that principles of fairness and honour prevail amongst them upon some if not upon all occasions. My friends were soon all quietly seated in parties, and in a few minutes all was profound quietness. I took this opportunity of riding to the opposite party, to see if I could recognize any of them. I found there a great many whom I knew and who also knew me, and we greeted each other with much cordiality. I also gave them some tobacco, and endeavoured to show them that I was the friend of all black fellows. In a short time ten or twelve of our emancipist sawyers, who were at work at the station, made their appearance to view the singular spectacle, which appeared to be upon a much larger scale than usual. On further inspection I found that Bry, little Flibberty Gibbet, and a young man called Jerry, (all of

whom belonged to the upper districts on the Karuah,) had come with several others to join the Port Stephens tribes against those of the Myall. After the lapse of about half an hour I was requested by Wallis to move out of the arena, as the "pight" would soon begin.

In a few minutes a native came running from behind a tree at a short distance behind us, with his spear raised and ready to be hurled; he then swept quickly along on the outside of the circle, with a light and even graceful step for about thirty paces, and back again in the same attitude, as if undetermined at which of the groups on the opposite side he should discharge the deadly weapon. On looking more closely at him, I found to my utter astonishment that it was no other than the demure, the tractable, and gentle Wool Bill, transformed as it were by magic, into a fierce and active warrior. At length he hurled his spear with such force and truth as to make the children and females of the party, against which it was aimed, scream and scamper behind the trees in their rear. This act of aggression brought forward one of the men from the opposite party, who stamped, and bellowed, and foamed for a short time, as if he were defying his opponents to proceed. In about five minutes he resumed his position on the ground, and was succeeded by an elderly woman of his party, with a short stick pointed at each end, which she grasped in the centre with her right hand. She advanced to nearly the middle of the space between the contending parties, flourishing her weapon and pouring forth volleys of abuse upon her enemies. She was soon answered on our side by a notorious old amazon, called Mammy Tinker, who went forward scolding and brandishing a similar weapon. These

two poor creatures stood both for some time opposite to each other menacing with their pointed sticks, as if they intended to come to close quarters; and screaming out abuse upon the tribes to which they were respectively opposed, while the parties on both sides sat quietly listening to their furious harangues.

At length an old man of our party, with a bald head and silvered locks, came forward with his spear and shield, and challenged any one of the opposite party to throw at him. He was called "Wool (old) Bungaree," and was the father of the gay, chattering, and warm-hearted Jemmy of the same name. His undaunted manner, which at first betokened determined bravery, soon assumed an air of demoniacal frenzy: he frequently placed himself in a position to throw his spear, advancing several paces and jerking his arm forward, as if about to deliver it; at length he suddenly threw it down by his side and commenced beating his bomering, or throwing stick, quickly and loudly on the outer surface of his shield, which he held up in front of him, bawling out in anger, and rapidly lifting up his feet alternately to the height of the knee, and stamping them sharply on the ground; then expertly picking up his spear with his toes, he repeated his menacing positions, continuing without intermission to mouth and roar out his abuse till his chest heaved convulsively, and streams of perspiration ran down every part of him,—thus exhibiting a painful picture of rude nature in a state of extreme excitement, in one of the kindest and most tractable of his species, but who had now wound himself up to the highest pitch of rage, of which the motive was to me perfectly unintelligible. Luckily, the poor old man found no one to encounter him,

and at length sat quietly down. He was succeeded by Jerry, who, to my great surprise, was immediately seconded by the placid and good-natured Bry; neither of whom proved, in any degree, inferior to their predecessors in eloquence or gesture. These also found no opponents. The perpetual recurrence of the words "white pellow" in their speeches, satisfied me that the quarrel had originated in the spearing of the shepherd; that our people had been called to account by the Myall tribes, for assisting me in the pursuit of the criminals; and I was also convinced that the presence of the muskets and the white men had saved them from a severe drubbing from the Myall tribes, who were stronger men, and more numerous than the Port Stephens tribes were.

In the midst of Bry and Jerry's harangues, I rode rather too far into the arena, when I was immediately met by Wickie, who, with some anxiety in his countenance, requested me to move back amongst the trees, as there would be danger from the spears, if any were thrown by their opponents. I could not but admire the kindheartedness and considerate conduct of this son of nature.

In the midst of the ravings I sent a black messenger to inform our orators that I was going away, and that they had better leave off and come with me. I had no idea that I should be attended to in such a case, and Jerry sent word that he could not go yet; upon which I immediately left the place. As soon as he saw this, he came running to me, with his spear and shield in his hand, to beg I would remain, saying that the "pight was not over yet." I however proceeded, and in less than five minutes Jerry and the whole tribe were at my heels, the two

champions looking like a couple of untrained horses after a hard run, blown and heaving for breath, with distended nostrils, and bathed in perspiration from head to foot.

I now enquired why the Myall natives had not accepted their challenge? Because they were "murry jarret," (afraid,) was the answer: beyond this I could learn nothing, nor would they tell me the origin of the quarrel; but their studied secresy helped to confirm my surmises on the subject.

I had before been present at several encounters and punishments, but at none where the numbers were so great. "A punishment" once took place on an open space at Port Stephens, very near to the establishment, which I will endeavour to describe.

After two parties had placed themselves much in the manner of the conflict just narrated, I appeared amongst them on horseback, and I believe almost every white person on the establishment was also present. I informed the combatants that I should be much displeased if they attempted to break each other's heads—that it was cruel, and I hoped they would leave it off. They treated this as perfectly ridiculous, and said it never hurt them. I was however of a different opinion, and they informed me that they would only do it a *little*, to which little however I could not agree. The punishment was occasioned by the death of Tony. Whenever a native meets with an accident or is killed, his friends call for the punishment of the person or persons who were present with him, conceiving it was their duty to have prevented the accident, no matter whether in their power or not. In such a case the relatives of the accused form a party in his or their favour,

and are opposed to those of the deceased, who are also joined by the rest of his tribe. Soon after my ineffectual remonstrances, Mammy Tinker (who was always one of the foremost upon these occasions) came forward, with her pointed stick in the manner before described, and was immediately answered by an old lady on the other side. Nothing could be more ridiculous in one sense, or more forlorn and humiliating in another, than this extraordinary spectacle of frail humanity, in a couple of naked women, with bodies bent and shrivelled by age, and with heads bald and scarred from the cruel usage of former days, standing forth, in a state of savage phrensy, to excite by every means in their power the ferocious feelings from which it had been their hard lot to suffer so frequently.

The person to be punished was Corbon Wickie, who came forward with his spear and shield, challenging any one or all of them to the combat. His figure was a fine contrast to those of the poor old females, being a handsome young man, above six feet high, and remarkably erect and well proportioned. He in the first instance harangued with a loud voice, beat the face of his shield with his throwing stick, and trod the ground with great violence; at length the word "alah" was sharply given from the opposite side, and followed by a spear, which made me tremble for him, but which he caught on his small shield with the greatest dexterity; it was succeeded in an instant by another from the same quarter, which he caught in a similar manner; it however pierced the shield, and, as he afterwards showed me, grazed the back of his fingers. A short pause ensued while he wrenched the spear from the shield, which he flourished in the air, shouting defiance. Several spears were now discharged

at him in quick succession, any one of which would have transfixed him, had his keen eye or agility of body failed him. In the end, a native approached within a very short distance of him, and after giving the warning word "alah," he threw at him with great force. The spear pierced above six inches through the shield, so that if it had struck the centre it must have transfixed his hand. Shortly after this a spear was coming in the direction of the lower part of his body, when he instantly dropped upon the left knee, at the same time bending his neck forward, so as to cover his head with the upper end of the shield, which, as it slanted towards the ground, protected the whole front of his supple body, in which position the shield turned the spear upwards, and sent it beyond him without its effecting mischief. This manœuvre was performed like magic, for it was not commenced till the moment the spear appeared to be ready to strike him, and the next moment he was again in position, braving his assailants in the most heroic manner. The parties were at length highly inflamed against each other, and Wallis, who was nearly as fine a young man as Corbon Wickie, advanced with his waddy to break his head; at this time the whole party moved towards the centre, where the barbarous skull hammering was about to commence. After some abuse and flourishing with their waddies, Wickie struck Wallis a tremendous blow on the crown of his head, which he purposely held forward, without any defence. In an instant he was seen dancing in the face of his opponent like a harlequin, brandishing his waddy, while the blood streamed down his cheeks and chest. Wickie now held forward *his* head to Wallis, who struck him a similar blow, when Wickie was seen dancing

and bleeding in like manner. At this moment I dashed in between them, and insisted upon their desisting. They were all instantly silent, and not the slightest opposition was made; but Wallis, who had always shown great attachment towards me, entreated that I would allow him to give Corbon Wickie one blow more, which should not hurt him, and then Wickie would give him another also. "Only a little bit, massa," he said, "bael hurt it, den no more coulor (anger); black pellow always do so."

The sight was most sickening to me, and I would allow no more of it. I reasoned and argued with both of them, and told them to shake hands. They seemed to be quite astonished that I should suppose they were enemies. Wallis said, "I like Corbon Wickie always, dat good pellow." "Why then," I said, "do you wish to hurt each other?" They both laughed outright at this question, which, as well as my reasoning, appeared quite incomprehensible to them.

The parties soon dispersed in peace, and I heard no more of them till the evening, when a dispute arose amongst them in the camp. While I was writing in my room a black woman suddenly entered, crying, and bleeding profusely from the head. This was Corbon Wickie's wife, who had offended one of the natives by too warmly taking her husband's part, and she had consequently received a cut in the head from his waddy down to the very skull. While the poor creature was telling me her story, and describing the quarrelling in the camp, the blood flowed down to her fingers' ends, and in the agitated state of her mind, she threw her arms about and bespattered me and my papers all over with it. I gave her an order for the constable to take the man into custody, and she

immediately ran off with it. I then hastened to the camp, and found them all in the greatest confusion, quarrelling and threatening each other most furiously. I called out in a tone of authority several times, and when their noise had nearly ceased, heard several voices in an under tone, directed to those who were still speaking, "Corbon massa! corbon massa here!" Knowing the influence I possessed, I insisted upon their delivering up the man who had wounded poor Peggy, and on their informing me of the cause of such a disturbance at that time of night, (it being nearly twelve o'clock,) they told me the man had run away, which I found to be true; for as soon as he saw Peggy on her road to me, he absented himself. Having ascertained that the present quarrel arose out of my interference to prevent the pell-mell fighting in the morning, I told them my feelings upon the matter in a conciliatory but firm tone, and left them with an assurance, that if any further rioting or fighting took place, I should send them all off the establishment the following day, and that they should no more belong to me. This had the desired effect, and poor Peggy returned soon afterwards to my room with the constable, who reported that the cruel offender, "Billy Button," had decamped, and was no where to be found.

The spear attacks upon the occasions of these punishments are always fairly conducted. No man throws without giving warning, and I never saw or heard of two persons throwing at the same time at one man. There are seldom any persons killed; but I have seen many of the natives wounded in the feet and hands by spears, and upon one occasion poor old Mammy Tinker had her arm pierced quite through by the pointed stick of an ancient female

champion, who had been opposed to her. She came to me, as she always did when in trouble, to show me her wound, which was bound over with the soft inner fold of the tea-tree bark. She told me the cause of it, and laughed, remarking at the same time, "most kill him arm, massa." I shook my head, and rebuked her for her folly; but when I pointed to her bald and scarred head with a shuddering frown, and held up my hands in pity for her, she laid her withered arm upon my shoulder and shook her head, looking up at me with an expression of countenance that indicated a keen recollection of her sufferings.

She had a husband, called Tinker: he was an old man, very tractable and kind in his nature; and although he, or some one else, appears to have shown the reverse of it upon particular occasions with reference to poor Mammy's skull, I can bear witness to the firm attachment of these two beings to each other. They were the parents of a grown-up family, and caressed and petted their grandchildren on all occasions. Whenever the old man saw me he would ask for tobacco, and if I gave him a piece he invariably said, "Mammy Tinker too;" and whenever I gave her any thing it was always "Tinker too;" and I fully ascertained that each faithfully delivered what was given for the other. Upon one occasion, when he was ill, she came to inform me of it with evident concern. Many a time has poor Mammy called after me to admire one of her little grandsons, about five years old, for whom she would petition for a piece of biscuit; and when I admired him, she would laugh and pat, or rather claw me on the shoulder with her lean and shrivelled black hands. I used in return to pat her cheek, which she held out for me,

and when the greeting was over, she would hold up both her hands, waving them backwards and forwards, smiling at me in the highest state of satisfaction. Upon other occasions our meetings were always of the affectionate cast, although sufficiently ludicrous; and I am perfectly certain that this poor creature would have wielded her pointed stick in my cause, had it been necessary, with as much zeal as she evinced upon the occasions I have described.

Another old woman, who by some means or other had obtained the name of Waterman, fixed herself in the house of the storekeeper, where, with the exception of a holiday now and then to the opposite shore, of which she was a native, I believe she was constant in her services. I observed, indeed, that there was a greater disposition in women of this age to domesticate themselves, than in younger ones, and that their constancy was more to be depended upon. The love of roaming had generally been abated, and sometimes extinguished by age and bodily weakness; and their extreme fondness of European diet, and the freedom from the punishment of the waddy, served to reconcile them in some degree to the restraints of civilized life, provided they were kindly treated, and *felt* they could leave and return whenever they pleased. The very idea of restraint or command at once destroyed their disposition to domesticate. The influence of kindness, the proper adaptation of employment, and a just consideration for their habits and general dispositions, can alone permanently secure their services. I will here introduce two characteristic anecdotes of these people.

A large party of the natives was taken up the country to assist in making a wash-pool at the river for the sheep,

and to clear away the burnt wood in the forest, which would have stained the wool after washing. They were occupied there about a fortnight, and during their absence a native tribe from the upper part of the Hunter's River had paid us a friendly visit. As soon as they heard of this they became uneasy, and the moment their work was finished, they returned home with my nephew. They were not satisfied at the visit of this strange tribe, and doubted the motives which caused it, in consequence of which they put themselves in martial array a short distance before they arrived at the establishment, with the view of producing an effect upon the minds of the strangers. Their road lay through the brick-yard, where I was at the time, and I suddenly heard the war cry of some natives in the forest, which was repeated louder and louder till they entered the yard in close order, marching with their spears up, headed by my nephew on horseback, and followed by their women. I could form no conjecture as to the cause of all this, and without interfering with the movement, I received a short explanation from my nephew as he rode past me, who requested that I would not stop him, as they wished to create an effect upon the minds of the Hunter's River natives. I allowed them to proceed with their yells and noise while I finished what I had to do: in about five minutes I followed, to see what was going on; when I had turned the corner of the hill which they had rounded, I found them all sitting in profound silence on the side of the hill, in a line at intervals from each other, some with their cheeks resting on their hands, and others with their heads dropping upon their bosoms in silent sorrow; while the females, with their elbows on their knees, had covered their faces with their hands. I inquired what was the

matter several times before I received an answer; at length I was informed in a low, plaintive tone, that it was "Piannah (father) belonging to Peggy been boy," (die), and a little further on sat Peggy herself, weeping in deep distress. I never recollect to have witnessed a more striking and affecting scene. The intelligence of this event was conveyed to them at the moment they arrived on the spot where I found them, by a native from the opposite shore, in which place the old man had died. They had entered the establishment in the height of their glory, excited to an extreme degree, yet in an instant were cast down, from the force of their natural and tender affections for their departed friend and relative. Can the beings, I would ask, who were capable of this, be justly charged with scarcely rising above the brute creation?

One of their men once fell sick, and was nursed with the greatest care and tenderness by the women about him. At length he died, and I was invited to see the body the evening before it was to be interred. I found it carefully wrapped round (excepting the face) with the folds of the tea-tree bark, and placed in a long sheet of a stiffer kind of bark; another sheet of bark was laid over the body when not being viewed, so that the upper and lower sheets formed a kind of coffin, while the tea-tree folds served for a shroud; the body was watched by several women, (the men having deserted the spot,) whose solemn countenances and subdued voices proved how much they were impressed with the awfulness of the event. I obtained a promise that I should be present at the interment on the following day; but, notwithstanding this assurance, was not permitted to know any thing further about it. I could not learn that any white man had ever been allowed to be

present at, or had even seen the place of interment of a native.

I never knew a single instance of want of fidelity and honesty in the natives when confidence had once been placed in them; but if no trust was put in them they would sometimes pilfer. I had once occasion to send a boat-load of stores to a station a few miles off, and employed four natives to assist two convicts in rowing them up. Before they started I said to the natives, as I often had done before, "You look out, you know, and take care croppy (convict) no crammer," (steal.) In the course of the day the convicts suddenly returned by land, and told a lamentable tale about the blacks, who they said were about to rob the stores, and that on their endeavouring to prevent them they had been thrown by them overboard, and obliged to swim ashore and run home to save their lives. I understood the matter perfectly, even from their own story, and ordered them to their huts till the affair could be investigated. In a short time the surgeon came to me, and reported that he had met four blacks in the forest in pursuit of the two convicts, who they informed him had proposed to them to rob the sugar-bag, which they would not suffer to be done; that the natives had actually made them prisoners, but in the end the convicts had jumped overboard and run away, in consequence of which the natives had moored their boat to a mangrove-tree, and gone in pursuit of them. The surgeon, on hearing their story, persuaded them to take the boat on while the tide served, and promised to report all to me. They took the boat accordingly, and after obtaining a receipt for the safe delivery of the stores, they returned. Hippie and Myall Tom were the two leading men; they

came to my door in the evening with a gentle tap, and on my calling to them to come in, made their appearance very respectfully; when Hippie held out his receipt to me, and began, in conjunction with Tom, to relate their story. Their animated countenances and odd gestures during their narrative, and the tone and language in which it was uttered, would have upset the gravest personage in Christendom. I was, however, delighted with them, and only regretted that I had nobody with me to witness the scene. The convicts were sent to a less agreeable employment, as a punishment, and I made Tom the captain of the boat, and employed him afterwards to navigate it with his own men *only*. He was proud of his office, which he retained for several months, until I saw it would be agreeable to him to be released from it; but in no instance was he ever unfaithful, nor did he incur even a suspicion of dishonesty during the period of his services, which, at that particular time, were certainly extremely valuable. I cannot omit to mention, that Myall Tom had no fewer than three wives; but this was only the second instance of poligamy that had come within my knowledge. I have often seen those women sitting in a group by his side in perfect harmony; and when I once scolded Tom on that score, he laughed, and slyly observed of himself, "Murry pine pellow, massa; blat gin look out me always." Tom was quite a character, being exceedingly droll and amusing in his way.

At the Company's store-house there was always a sentry placed, and between the time of his going off duty after daylight and the store-keeper's entrance for business, a hardened old convict, of the name of Cope, broke open the door, and robbed the store. As he was coming

out with several articles under his arm, he was observed by two black boys, Mick and Sinbad, who, by the kindness of the storekeeper towards them, were secured in his interest. The moment, therefore, that Cope issued from the store, they ran to William, as they called him, whose hut was only about thirty yards off, and informed him of what they had seen. A pursuit was instantly commenced; but Cope having the start of them, had thrown away, or *planted*, as they call it, the stolen goods, entered his hut, taken off his clothes, and got to bed, before the storekeeper, Cowell, with all his speed could arrive. Cope appeared as innocent as a child when Cowell entered, and of course knew nothing at all about it; he had never (honest man) been out of his bed, as his comrades in the hut could tell; and they all, with equal honesty, and with an appearance of great concern, confirmed this honest man's statement. Cowell, however, had by this time learned something of the ways of the little world at Port Stephens, and not accounting all fair that appeared so, chose to preserve his own opinion in opposition to their protestations, and searched the hut, but could find nothing, and retired, fairly "flabbergasted," as they term it. The little black fellows, however, persisted in their statement: they knew Cope well, as, indeed, they did every one else on the establishment; they described the articles which he had under his arms when they saw him; and lo! in the course of the day, some of them were found concealed in honest Cope's track from the store to his hut. He was immediately put into the lock-up-house, and ordered, with Cowell and the two black boys, to appear before me in the evening, after my return from business in the forest. I must premise that little Sinbad

was the identical boy who stole into my boat, and lighted me with his torch in the forest, when I bivouacked on the river Myall, on my way to investigate into the murder of the black boy. A more interesting boy of his age was perhaps seldom seen. It was candle-light when the parties entered my room: little Sinbad had his hair turned up and tied in a point; he wore an opossum belt, and a waddy in it, in imitation of the men. Little Mick, who was about the same age as Sinbad, was a fat, round-faced, sturdy little fellow, with quite an European form and countenance. Cope having been brought forward, and placed between Cowell and the constable, the two little fellows immediately turned their backs to him, and stood with their side-faces towards me, and their hands behind them. I asked them whether they knew the man who stood opposite to me. Sinbad looked over his shoulder at him, and answered, "Yes, I know dat pellow; dat Wool Cope." "State what you know about him," I said. He answered, "Oh! I been tee it crammer belonging to store." "Well," I said, "turn round, and let us all see you;" but neither of them would do this; they were afraid of Cope, and nothing could prevail upon them to face him. "Well," I said, "say what you know about it, and mind you speak the truth." Sinbad answered, "Bael me tell a lie. I been tee Cope, and Micky been tee it too: dat been come out belonging to store when urokah (sun) jump up. I been tee Cope crammer plenty belonging to store; dat put it under arm like it dis, (imitating Cope's manner, and describing the articles,) den dat run all along creek; den me tee it no more, cos I been run along Micky, and piola (tell) William. Den when look out along William dat gone."

Cope exclaimed, "What lies they have been telling!" At this, Sinbad looked over his shoulder at him again, and said, with indignant emphasis, "Bael lie!" then casting his eyes towards me, he said, with a softened tone, "Cos I been *tee* it, massa, and Micky been tee it too;" to which Mick instantly assented. The whole scene was exceedingly curious and interesting, and not likely to be soon forgotten by any one who witnessed it. The evidence of the boys was confirmed by the finding of the articles they had described; but Cope, who was learned in the practice of examinations, as well as in the art of thieving, declined saying any thing more *upon that occasion*; and as it was doubtful how far he could be convicted in court upon the evidence of these two *uncivilized* boys, I placed Mr. Cope for a certain period in the chain gang, where he had no opportunities of repeating his tricks.

CHAPTER VIII.

ACTIVITY OF NATIVES IN APPREHENDING RUNAWAY CONVICTS—
 ANECDOTES OF NATIVES AND EMANCIPISTS—THEFT BY A NATIVE—MEANS USED TO APPREHEND HIM—HIS DEPLORABLE APPEARANCE—HIS PUNISHMENT—BEN THE FISHERMAN—FLYING FOXES—SUDDEN ENCOUNTER WITH A STRANGE TRIBE—GIGANTIC LILIES—ANECDOTES—FISH—PARENTAL INFLUENCE—FILIAL ATTENTION—CURIOUS CUSTOMS OF NATIVES—NATIVES NEVER ARRIVE AT VERY OLD AGE—NO NATURAL DEFORMITY SEEN AMONGST THEM—ANECDOTE—TRIBES—FAVOURABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OBSERVING THE CHARACTER AND HABITS OF THE NATIVES—ATTEMPTS AT CIVILIZING THEM—COMPLETE SUCCESS IN ONE INSTANCE—ERRONEOUS REPORTS CONCERNING THE ABORIGINES—SPECULATIONS ON THEIR ORIGIN—ANECDOTES IN ILLUSTRATION—REASONS IN SUPPORT OF THE ANTIQUITY OF THIS RACE OF PEOPLE.

NEAR the upper extremity of the navigable waters of the Karuah, and on its opposite bank, was a hut occupied by one of the Company's overseers. At this place a native, who called himself Billy Bungaree, (a son and brother of the natives before mentioned,) generally resided: he had a constable's staff, and considered himself as the protector, in his absence, of the overseer's wife and family, as well as a look-out constable for *croppy*, (as they always call the runaway convicts.)

As he was standing one morning at the door of this

hut, he caught a glimpse of a convict mechanic named Goodwin, who had recently decamped from Port Stephens. He was on the opposite bank of the river, skulking behind the trees to avoid being seen. Bungaree called out for a musket directly, put himself across the river in a boat, and in a few minutes tracked, came up with, and secured the man, who was finally delivered up to a constable stationed at a place called Boarul, where he was handcuffed, and locked up a short time before I accidentally called there.

Although there were many fine able-bodied men amongst the natives, still this Bungaree was by far the largest and most resolute man I had seen, and I have no doubt that he would, armed only with his waddy, have secured the runaway. Goodwin and he were perfectly well known to each other, and the account Bungaree gave of the capture was, that as soon as he came within shot of the prisoner, he called to him to stop, threatening to shoot him if he did not. "Top bit, top bit, massa carpenter; what for come here? I choot you pose no top." Goodwin immediately stopped and wished to be upon familiar terms with him, telling him that he was going to Hunter's River to bring home cattle for Corbon Massa. "No, no," said Bungaree, "bael you belonging to cattle; you belong to carpenter." Goodwin took some trouble to convince him that he was upon business for Corbon Massa. When Bungaree informed me, he observed, "Where pass belonging to Corbon Massa." Goodwin immediately showed him a forged one; but Bungaree not believing any thing he said, called out "Gammon! you belonging to carpenter. Bael Corbon Massa make it you look out cattle. No! no! bael you gammon me

so. Moru on belonging to Boarul; (walk on to Boarul,) pose run, I choot it massa Goodwin. Plenty look out belonging to Billy Bungaree always." He then drove the prisoner before him to the station, and delivered up the convict as I have before stated, and with him also the pass, to which my name had been forged, and which was delivered to me. A pair of trousers was always the reward for such a service, and Bungaree was soon at the store with an order for them. The idea of being so taken by a single native appeared to chagrin Goodwin, and added, I have no doubt, to the annoyance of his subsequent sentence to three months' labour in the chain-gang. As soon as his punishment had expired he was allowed to resume his former employment with similar advantages. I always proceeded upon the principle, that it was never too late to reform; and considered it my duty to place the convicts in situations where the truth of this should always be apparent to themselves; and I have no recollection, except in one instance, of having returned any convict to the government as hopeless. I may mention here what will perhaps appear a singular fact, that although (much to my annoyance) obliged to act in the double capacity of master and magistrate, and although surrounded by large numbers of the very dregs of the dregs of society—of those who had been returned as hopeless by private settlers—still I never upon any occasion slept with my door fastened, nor, to my knowledge, did I ever lose to the value of sixpence from my private property; and although exposed in every possible way by night and by day, being sometimes at a considerable distance from home, I never met with any obstruction or any thing bordering upon an insult from any convict on

the grant, during my residence there for a period of two years and two months.

A convict upon some other occasion had run away, and concealed himself in the neighbouring hills. The natives were desired to keep a sharp look out for him. At length he was forced by the cold down to their camp during the night, hoping, by the promise of his blanket, that they would not betray him; while they encouraged him to stretch himself before the fire, Wallis stole off to me, and thrusting his head in at my door, awoke me with the following words in a half whisper: "Massa! massa! croppy come down: dat nangry (sleep) black camp. Gib it ticket belonging to constable; ketch it den murry toon, directly." There being no constable on the immediate spot, I sent him to call my nephew and one of the servants, who proceeded with Wallis to the camp, where they found the man as he described, and immediately took him to the lock-up house.

Before a sufficient number of convicts could be trained to the business of sawing and other mechanical operations, it was the practice to hire men who had formerly been convicts, but who, after their period of servitude had expired, were called "emancipists." Two of these sawyers set out, one Sunday morning, to pay a visit to their friends at some distance from them; but in endeavouring to do so, lost their way, and wandered they knew not whither. Intending to stay all night, they had taken their blankets with them. After travelling nearly the whole of the day, they were suddenly met by five or six natives, armed with spears. Being in the neighbourhood of the Myall River, and not knowing the persons of the white men, the natives concluded they were *croppies*,

who had run away from the penal settlement of Port Macquarie, and appeared determined to plunder them of their blankets and clothes. They protested, however, that they were not croppies, that they belonged to Corbon Massa; but not a word of this would the blacks believe. The men were first obliged to deliver up their blankets, then their jackets, and next came a demand for their shirts. The white men begged very hard to be allowed to retain these, it being winter, and the nights very cold; but no, they must give up the shirts too; and with extreme reluctance one of the men pulled off his shirt, which was immediately taken by one of the natives, who, after he had got it on, and was looking down to admire it, discovered on its tail the Company's store mark. He immediately became alarmed, and drew it back over his head, exclaiming, as he threw it on the ground, "Bael me take it, belonging to Corbon Massa." The blankets and jackets were all returned instantly, and the sawyers were conducted to the nearest stock station, where they all took tea cordially together.

I mentioned, in a former part of this book, an anecdote of Corbon Tom and a black girl, whom he wished to marry. Tom, some time after this, committed himself very deeply, by stealing no less than half a hundred weight of soft sugar from a temporary store at one of the stations. Upon the theft being discovered he ran off, when I called on the natives generally to take him and bring him to me. I made frequent enquiries about him from time to time, for at least two months, but still every one pretended not to know where he was. I was at length informed that he used occasionally to come to the camp of his friends in the dark, when I gave them all their

choice, either to bring him for punishment, or to leave the establishment, and be no longer considered as belonging to me. The alternative was a hard one, but as Tom was not forthcoming for some days afterwards, I informed the principal men that I should, on the following day, insist upon every man, woman, and child, leaving the establishment. I knew that if this theft went unpunished, it would lead to others, and either end in the dissolution of our connexion entirely, or of its continuance upon principles which would be of no advantage to either party. I knew also that I should finally gain my point, however painful the means whereby the measure was effected. Accordingly, the next morning, (Tom not having been delivered up,) the establishment was cleared, and they all chose to go with their canoes to the opposite side of the harbour. Many of them passed me, on their way to their canoes. I took no notice of them, but looked as grave and solemn as I could. Alarm and sorrow was depicted in every countenance, but nothing in the slightest degree that appeared like revenge. It was a calamity that they knew not how to avoid, and to which they saw they must submit. As I saw them paddling across the harbour in their canoes, I felt a degree of melancholy and uneasiness which it is difficult to describe; yet, upon reflecting that it was for their greater happiness hereafter, and for the protection of others, I could not alter my decision.

The first complaints that reached me after they were gone, were, that all the white families were without any servants to assist them in their domestic affairs—nobody to carry water, no fish to be had, nor fire-wood, no messengers, &c. &c. In short, the place appeared a gloomy

and almost deserted village, whose cheerfulness and conveniences, it was now clearly seen, had in a great measure depended upon these hitherto calumniated outcasts of the world. I was repeatedly asked when the blacks would return, both by men and women, as they did not know what to do without these useful folks. Within two days of their departure, a deputation, in the persons of Corbon Wickie and his wife Peggy, was sent to me by the multitude on the opposite shore. They pleaded hard for their brethren, and said, that "All black pellow murry torry; got no patter, massa; no bacca, dat been moke him rags (smoking rags) all day. Black pellow all boy, (die,) pose no come back again." To all which I answered, "Bring Corbon Tom, and then you may all come back again, but not till then." To which the usual answer was given, "No can find him, massa; gone away in bush."

Thus our conference broke up, and another day passed, when Corbon Wickie and Peggy appeared again in the evening, and promised, in the name of all their friends, that Tom should either be taken, or never suffered to appear again in their company, either by night or by day. To this compromise I agreed, feeling assured that Tom would now be sufficiently punished, for they were aware that it was not easy for him to come amongst them without my being informed of it, in which event they were made to understand that they would all be sent off again immediately. In the morning of the following day, several small fleets of canoes arrived, and before night the poor creatures were all settled again in the usual manner, full of gaiety and good will. In a few days after this, Tom finding that he must lead a still more soli-

tary life than he had previously done, by being excluded from his friends at night, delivered himself up to several of the blacks, who marched with him between them to the corner of my cottage, where they halted, and sent a messenger to say they had got Corbon Tom. The moment I made my appearance Tom's heart failed him, and he broke away and ran like a deer into the hills at the back of the house, where he remained for several days more. At length he voluntarily gave himself up again, preferring any punishment to that of banishment from his tribe, and appeared before me handcuffed in charge of the constable, and accompanied by a numerous body of his friends. He was a tall man, and had been more than usually stout and robust; but was now a poor wasted and forlorn looking creature, with his cheeks fallen in, and, in fact, his *tout ensemble* exhibiting signs of misery and starvation. I was truly shocked to see him, and was puzzled in my mind what punishment to devise for him that would produce a proper effect, without being too hard upon him in his reduced condition. I felt that his punishment had already been severe, but the force of example was now necessary to bring the affair to an effective conclusion. At length I was relieved by my old acquaintance, Ben, who whispered to me, "Bael let croppy plog it: black pellow plog it." The former I should on no account have thought of or permitted, and the latter would never have occurred to my mind as agreeable, or even practicable. I had no idea, even after this, that any individual amongst them would volunteer to do it, but on my asking Ben what black fellow would flog him, he called out, in a high tone of animation, "I plog it, massa, I plog it." I remarked to him, that if he did, perhaps

all black fellows would be angry with him. But Ben quickly replied, "No, no, massa! all black pellowes been piola me, (saying,) 'Ben plog it, Ben plog it;'" so that, in fact, they had settled the affair amongst themselves before they came to me. Tom in consequence received from the hand of Ben a dozen lashes, in the presence of a large number of his countrymen, during which he never stirred or moved a muscle; and I must say that Ben showed no disposition to favour him in the infliction of the punishment. As soon as it was over Tom was set at liberty, and I was curious to see how he would conduct himself. The first thing he did was to come up to me, and looking me in the face, he observed, "Murry couler now, massa?" that is, "Are you angry with me now?" To which I replied, that I was not, and he immediately held out his hand to me, which I accepted most willingly, Tom remarking at the same time, "No more crammer, massa, nebber." I then explained to them all that they must not steal; that they could not continue to be my brothers if they did; that they knew I liked all black fellows very much indeed; and that, provided Tom never *crammed* again, I should now like him as well as ever. They assented to all I said, and all promised "Nebber to crammer belonging to massa."

On the following morning, Tom came tapping at my bed-room window soon after sunrise, asking permission to go on board a small schooner which was about to proceed up the river Karuah for oyster-shells, to burn for lime. The master wanted a fourth hand to assist him, and Tom having volunteered his services, came immediately to me, to ask leave to accompany him, which I instantly granted. In the course of the day I saw him in the vessel, passing

a point of the harbour where I was standing ; and received a wave of the hand and a nod from him with much more pleasure than he, poor fellow, in the simplicity of his heart, could form any idea of. This incident, relative to Corbon Tom, occurred not long before I left the grant, and I have no recollection of having seen him again after this greeting from on board the schooner. Ben and his wife Nanny were frequent visitors at Port Stephens, when they knew I was at home. They never professed to be constant residents there, their favourite place being on the shore near what is called Point Stephens, where they procured abundance of fish with the greatest facility. Ben knew I was fond of craw-fish, and when he was out of tobacco and iron fishing-hooks, which the natives preferred to their own, he was sure to wait upon me with craw-fish, or other fish when the first were out of season, and frequently with a net full of shells and pearl fishing-hooks, which I received as curiosities. He was always a merry fellow, and a great favourite with me, of which he was well aware. If a boat was wanted amongst them, (as was frequently the case for a fishing party,) when Ben was there, he always undertook to ask for it ; and if there were any difficulties in the way, he never failed to urge, in the most laughable manner, his claims of former services, and his gift to me of all the country on the south side of the harbour, which, from my frequent acknowledgments to him, had served as a bond of friendship between us. There were frequent demands for boats, either for fishing ; or for conveyance across the harbour to their festivals, when they happened to be short of canoes. As, however, the boats were sometimes all required for necessary purposes, they could not always be accommodated,

although the boats were never refused when they could be spared. Ben had, in the first instance, a constable's staff, which he always retained, and talked as if he considered himself a kind of deputy over my dominions on "t'oder side," as they were used to call it.

I was one afternoon returning home from a ride of above twenty miles by a circuitous route, when I saw a great number of animals, called flying foxes, floating in the air, and at a distance resembling rooks; they were hovering about some high trees, as if disturbed by somebody or something below. It was the first time I had seen any of these curious creatures, and I could not get rid of the feeling that they were rooks, although I knew there were no rookeries in the colony. I galloped on, looking up at them, till I came quite unexpectedly upon a large tribe of natives, not less than one hundred of them. They were strangers from the upper districts of the Myall, and were sitting round their fires, roasting and eating the flying foxes, which they had speared from the trees in a jungle by the side of a creek. As soon as I saw them, which was not till I had turned the corner of a hill, I pulled up with a momentary feeling of alarm, but recovering myself almost immediately, rode up with a confident feeling that I should be known by some of them. A deep silence prevailed for a short space, which was occupied by us in surveying each other. I then threw several small pieces of tobacco amongst them, and called out, "I like black fellows always." The tobacco was instantly seized, when quick chattering ensued amongst them, and I soon heard the words Corbon Massa pronounced several times. In a minute or two, a tall, fierce-looking fellow came up to me,

and felt my coat pockets, and on discovering that there was more tobacco there, he pointed to it, as if he wished me to give him some, looking me in the face at the same time, and nodding his head while he uttered, "Corbon Massa, good while ago nangry," (sleep,) and then pointed towards the shore, by which I knew he must have been one of the men who had slept with us in the sandy hollow before described. Several children and women then came forward, who knew me. I gave them as much tobacco as I could spare, in return for which I asked to be permitted to partake of some of the stalk of the gigantic lily which they were roasting, and of which they had abundance around them. My request produced a laugh amongst them; but as I persisted in it, I was supplied with some, which I ate with a show of liking it. They appeared gratified at this, and soon offered me ten times as much as I wanted. It was very mucilaginous, and I have no doubt nourishing, without much flavour, but like most other plants which flourish in the poorest soils in Australia, it appeared to contain a considerable quantity of saccharine juices. I next requested to look at a flying fox, which one of them held in his hand. It was, in fact, a large kind of bat, with the nose resembling in colour and shape that of a fox, and in scent it was exactly similar to it. The wing was that of a common English bat, and as long as that of a crow, to which it was about equal in the length and circumference of its body. The natives appeared very fond of them, and I dare say they were as nutritious as any other food which the forest produced.

Having satisfied my curiosity, and being about to depart, I was suddenly accosted by a loud voice a short distance behind me, calling out, "Budgereee you, my boy;"

and looking round I saw my old friend Tinker, who was coming as a deputy from Port Stephens to this camp, and who on hearing me answer him in the same words, burst into a wild and loud laugh, quickening his step to meet me, with a countenance full of glee. After we met and joined hands, and while I was patting him on the shoulder, his dark eyes assumed a peculiar expression of inward pleasure, while his protruded lips quivered in sympathy with a chuckling voice, as if between crying and laughing, for the space of a minute, when he again broke out into "budgerree you, budgerree you," with several corrobory or harlequin steps, strongly indicative of the greatest joy. Tinker and I were both anxious to learn each other's business at this particular spot, and until I had answered all his questions, as to where I had been, where I was going, &c. it was in vain for me to attempt to draw any thing from him. I however learned from him at last that a fight was in contemplation, and that Tinker had come hither to settle the place and other matters; but I was exceedingly surprised to observe him before I left, sitting down in the midst of the strangers, as if he had been one of their own body, and feasting heartily upon the roasted lily or menny, as they call it.

A short time after this, when alone in a distant and unfrequented part of the forest, I met with an elderly man, who was sitting down with a fire-brand in his hand, resting himself on his journey. He was greatly alarmed when he saw me, and attempted to run off, but as I was on horseback he could not escape me. Having one of my natives with me, matters were soon explained to the old gentleman's satisfaction, and in return for a stone hatchet which he gave me, I presented him with an iron one, which

my native attendant had in his belt, and which seemed to give him great pleasure; and about a month after this he found his way to Port Stephens, and came to me with "Youee," (who proved to be his son,) to complain that a white man had met him in the forest and taken his hatchet from him, under the pretence that it had been stolen. He could not however give me such a description as to enable me to identify the man; but the manner Youee told the story was exceedingly interesting; his lamentations that "white pellow" should treat his father so, and the mild, complaining tone in which they were made, portrayed thoroughly his filial attachment to his father, of whom he several times said, turning to him with a tone and manner that could not be mistaken, "*Murry* good wool man! *Murry* good wool man, massa."

The object of the poor old man was no doubt to repair his loss by getting another tomahawk, than which nothing could be more natural, especially when it is known that this simple implement possesses more value in their eyes than any other thing that could be offered to them; and the zeal which Youee displayed in endeavouring to serve his father in so important a matter, (from which, as they lived at a distance from each other, he could derive no selfish advantages,) betokened feelings which would have done honour to many men of much higher pretensions than Corbon Youee. I need scarcely say that the pleading was successful, and the tomahawk given.

If all the white men with whom I was unfortunately connected in the Australian Agricultural Company had displayed only one tithe of the good feeling towards me which were shown by my sable friends to myself and to each other, I should not have been compelled a few months

since to submit to the public a tale so little to the honour of many individuals, both in London and at Sydney.

Another very marked and disinterested instance of kind feeling occurred in Jemmy Bungaree, which I cannot resist relating, although it is one only amongst numerous others that were continually displayed both by him and his countrymen. There is a common fish in the colony called a stingaree; its tail is pointed, and so sharp that the natives in bathing near a low shore are frequently wounded by it in the feet, occasioning considerable pain and inflammation. They have an idea that this fish is poisonous, and consequently never taste it. This is merely traditional amongst them. A servant named Jones, whom the natives always called Doyn, was one evening cooking one of these fish at a fire near my tent, when Bungaree unexpectedly appeared, and was struck with astonishment and alarm on seeing it in the frying-pan. He immediately said, in a quick, agitated manner, "What for cook him, stingaree? trow it away, trow it away—no good, no good, make white pellow boy," (die). Jones still went on frying and taking no notice of Bungaree's remarks. He next came to me, and exclaimed, "What for white pellow patter stingaree, massa? piola (tell) Doyn trow it away." Bungaree was told that it was not poison, but very good; this, however, went for nothing with him, who thought he knew better than we did, and he therefore returned to the fire, pacing about in a very restless state, and repeating his remonstrances several times, while Jones continued to fry, regardless of poor Bungaree's anxiety. When he saw the cooking nearly at an end, and that the fatal dish was really intended to be swallowed, he could restrain his feelings no longer, and burst out with a couple of tre-

mendous oaths to Jones, enjoining him to "trow it away," with such earnestness as set the whole circle in a roar of laughter. I had however been a more attentive spectator of Bungaree's conduct than he imagined, and thought it a good opportunity of convincing him that his prejudice had no reasonable foundation. The fish was tasted, and as Bungaree saw no harm resulting from it, he never resumed the subject, although I have no doubt that the prejudice against its flesh remained as strong on his mind as that existing in ours is against using cats or rats for food.

Before the offal from the cattle became plentiful, the natives used to spear great quantities of these fish, to be boiled down for our dogs, for whom they proved a good food. Although the men fish when it suits their convenience or pleasure, still it is the women who are looked to for the supply of the members of the family. So important an office do they consider this near the coast, that the mother nominates one of her female children to it as soon as born, amputating the little finger of the right hand, as a token of such appointment. I however prohibited this practice as far as I could. Several barbarous acts of this kind were prevented amongst them by the white women of the establishment, who treated the natives upon all occasions, more especially those of their own sex, with great humanity and kindness.

The natives however are so fond of their children, that they seem to labour to serve them as long as they can, even when they are old enough to assist them. It was very common to see canoes, constructed of bark, lying like small black spots on the water at a distance for hours, according to the tide, with two poor gins, frequently the

grandmother and her married daughter, one at each end of the frail bark, watching and hooking the fish as they came in and went out with the tide. They always put a flat stone or two in the centre of the canoe, and place upon it several firebrands, with which they warm themselves when the weather is cold, and they also cook their fish and roast oysters for their subsistence while in the canoe. They have a large utensil, which is procured from the trees, upon the branches of which it is found as an excrescence, in which they carry several quarts of fresh water. I have frequently fallen in with them thus equipped in various quarters of the harbour while in my boat, which was invariably rowed by natives; many are the occasions on which I have exchanged with them biscuits and tobacco for a luncheon of roasted oysters and a string of fish; and even if I was provided with nothing to give in return, the oysters and fish were as eagerly supplied if I wanted them, as if I had offered them all they could desire.

The parents retain, as long as they live, an influence over their children, whether married or not. As long as the sons remain unmarried they form a part of the family, and in the event of the father's decease the mother still retains her place and influence. If her children should all marry during her widowhood, she dwells with one of them, and appears much attached to her grandchildren. It sometimes happens that there are several sons and no daughters, as in a case of which I was a witness; the sons were neither of them married, and their father had long been dead—these sons were M'Quarie and Wool Bill, both of whom were very much attached to their mother, who was one of the best old women amongst them. Bill

was generally in my kitchen, and never failed, when opportunities offered, to pay attention to her by giving her his blanket, and begging tobacco and pieces of broken victuals for her. M'Quarie was always with his mother when circumstances admitted of it; but one day wishing to take a wife, he brought home a young girl whom his mother would not permit him to retain, and she was sent away again. I wished to know from him why he had parted with her, and his answer was: "Bael wool mammy let me keep it." I then asked him the reason of this, and he informed me his mother did not like her, and that she wanted him to choose a better. I have many times seen this son, when he was very hungry, receive boiled Indian corn after his work, and carry the whole of it for several miles to divide with his mother. The same conduct was pursued by the married men towards their families. In the cold weather the men, when they had blankets, invariably gave them up to the females who were without them. Such acts as these must be placed to the credit side of the account, in opposition to the effects of sudden passion, from which the poor women too frequently suffer, as has been before shown.

When any death occurs, the female relatives of the deceased not only put on mourning, by beplastering themselves with pipe-clay, as I have already stated; but they further testify their concern, by burning with a firebrand the front of the thigh, tying over the wound a piece of soft tea-tree bark. This practice actually lames them for a time, and must occasion a good deal of pain, but no complaints are ever heard from them. There are few women without scars, arising from this practice. Again, if any one meets with an accident which does not produce

immediate death, the females of the family take a narrow slip of tough pliable bark, called curry-jung, and saw their upper gums with it till they bleed, when they spit the blood into the wooden utensil or bowl before described. They continue this for a length of time, under the idea that it tends to the recovery of the patient. The operation must be a severe punishment to them and is a painful one to witness. It was once performed for me by several old women, on my being confined to my room by a fall from my horse.

No wounds, however severe, are sufficient to draw forth any expressions of pain from the men. Two of them at Port Stephens met with accidents from muskets: the hand of the first (Youee) was literally shattered to pieces, and the skin and flesh for several inches above the wrist were torn down, leaving the muscles exposed. He came with the greatest coolness, holding the shattered hand in the other, "To look out soccatoo," (the doctor.) The surgeon wished to amputate it, but Youee would not allow him to do so on any account. The flesh about the wrist was then turned back, and the wounds bound up without the patient ever wincing. It was dressed several times afterwards under the same extraordinary resolution. In a few days, however, Youee absented himself, and no one knew whither he had gone. The surgeon predicted that the part would mortify, and that poor Youee would make his exit from this world. In about six weeks, however, he returned free from all danger, and showed me his disfigured and deformed hand, which was nearly well.

The second was a case similar to it in the lad Wandoman, who was one of the boys I met in the forest with

the old man, on my first journey on the grant from Port Stephens: he also refused to submit to amputation, and stole off, like Youee, to some sequestered spot, where he remained for several months. He returned, however, without his hand, which had sloughed off a little above the wrist, the stump was fast healing and in a healthy state, and, like Youee's wound, it was bound over with a piece of old rag till it was perfectly well. On my asking Wandoman what he had done with his hand, he answered, very jokingly, "Trow him away." I discovered afterwards that they had been to a place called the Bungewall Ground, which is a low, moist part of the country, covered with a species of fern, (which grows only where there is perpetual moisture,) upon the roots of which, when pounded between two stones and roasted, they had subsisted during their absence from Port Stephens. They are always, on these occasions, accompanied by some, if not all the female members of their family, especially their mothers if living.

A brother of Croseby's was, for a long period, a regular attendant upon the establishment; at length I missed him, and on making enquiries after him, was told that he was lame and gone to patter (eat) bungewall. In one of my peregrinations in the forest I found him: there were with him his wife and several elderly women, whom I knew to be his near relatives. He was lying, poor fellow, before the fire, much wasted and afflicted, either with a white swelling of the knee, or with some serious injury or disorder in the joint, which was bound over with the tea-tree bark, and in this state the patient was dependent entirely upon the women both for his subsistence and for every other care which was necessary to preserve him.

Some time after this he returned to the establishment, free from pain, but with contracted sinews, from which he obtained the appellation of lame Croseby. There are no instances amongst the natives of tatooing their bodies, but they are all, both men and women, marked in various parts by raised scars: the process commences by making deep incisions on the chest, back, shoulders, or loins, (never on the face,) with sharp edges of shells, according to the taste of the operators. The wounds are afterwards kept in a state of irritation for a long period, and when the proud flesh, or fungus, is raised sufficiently above the surrounding surface, the wounds are allowed to heal, leaving raised lines of various lengths and forms. The operation is performed at various ages, from one or two years, to ten or twelve; and as the wounds are sometimes kept open for a year or more, the pain and inconvenience must be very great: indeed, the wasted frames and haggard appearance of the little sufferers during this period sufficiently indicate this.

The men have another extraordinary custom, which is that of boring the cartilage of the nose adjoining the upper lip: its origin no doubt was that they might suspend ornaments from it; but this practice seems to be abandoned, as I never saw any other use made of it than to thrust sticks or the small bone of a kangaroo's leg through it; but this appears to be very seldom done, and only for the purpose of producing a laugh, which being accomplished, the stick or bone is immediately thrown away. The suffering, however, which they undergo during the process of boring, (which is done by a pointed bone,) and the means which are afterwards used to keep open the orifice, are quite extraordinary. The ceremony of boring seldom takes place

till they are at the age of puberty, and then they go away to some remote place, accompanied by several of their male friends, with the person who performs the operation, who is looked up to as a kind of doctor upon other occasions. As soon as the cartilage is perforated, a small bundle of the clear round stems of withered grass is introduced into the orifice, which is extended every day by thrusting fresh stems into the centre of the bundle until it is increased to the required size. I never saw the operation performed, nor did I ever know any white man who had been permitted to see it; but I heard the natives describe it, and saw them with the small bundles of grass in their noses soon after the boring, and frequently witnessed the introduction of the fresh stems of grass I have described. If any one may judge from the inflamed and festered state of the wound, the wasted frame and sunken cheeks of the patients, the sufferings must be intense for several weeks. During the time it lasts, the swelling and the grass prevent the air from passing through the nostrils, and oblige them therefore to keep their mouths constantly open : the effect of it also is, to lower or flatten a little the extremity of the nose, as well as to distend the nostrils permanently, so that their whole appearance for some weeks after the operation, is both distressing and disgusting. Happily for the females they are exempt from this barbarous custom. When the wound has been sufficiently distended, (which is sometimes done to a degree that occasions the cartilage to break,) the inflammation and soreness begins to subside, the grass is exchanged for a bone of about an inch and a half in circumference, from the leg of a kangaroo, which remains inserted until the irritation ceases.

I thought, as Wool Bill was so very tractable and reasonable, and so much with me, that I should have been able to prevail upon him not to submit to the painful and disgusting custom, which I frequently ridiculed, in endeavouring to dissuade him from it. He, however, absented himself one morning contrary to his custom, and was absent about a week, when he returned a most woful and emaciated figure, with his mouth open, his nose swollen and sore, and a bundle of grass thrust through it. "Oh, Bill!" I exclaimed, when I saw him, "no more belonging to me now. What for do so? What for do so?" Bill was in no condition to meet my joke with a laugh; his answer, however, that "all black pellow do so," was sufficiently explanatory: it was the one which usually settled all matters of the kind between us.

Before a native is considered eligible to marry, he must lose one of his front teeth. On a day appointed, the families meet in some secluded part of the forest, where a kind of festival is held: the tooth upon this occasion is struck out by the same person who bores the noses.

He performs the operation as a blacksmith farrier would knock out the tooth of a horse, viz. by placing a piece of stone in the form of a wedge against it, and then striking it sharply with a heavy stone. After the ceremony the parties remain together for several days, and enjoy themselves by dancing and such other amusements as are common amongst them. In general their teeth are very white, and what is remarkable, I never saw any of the old people who had lost them. The simplicity of their diet, and the circumstance of their never attaining to *very* old age, may perhaps account for this. Amongst a people who have no signs for numbers beyond their five fingers,

and whose ten fingers indicate many thousands, or any large number that the imagination may form, it is of course impossible to ascertain the age of any one of them, nor have they any hieroglyphics or signs by which to record events of importance. I never saw one individual that exhibited marks of very old age. I saw two or three men whose hair and beards were white, but they were not bent by age, or incapable of performing the various duties which their wandering habits imposed upon them. I saw many elderly and miserable-looking females, whose bodies appeared wasted, and the duration of their existence shortened, more from the hardships they had suffered through the violent and sudden passions of the men than from age. The disorders which chiefly affect both sexes are catarrhs and the consequences which frequently follow the neglect of them—such as inflammation of the pleura and lungs, and bilious cholics, which frequently carry them off. They appear to have no specifics for any disorder, nor to use any herbs or roots which are possessed of cathartic qualities. They eat several kinds of roots which they believe are good for them when they are ill; but which appear to do neither good nor harm, and they sometimes chew the leaf of a creeping liquorice plant which they find in the woods. When they are ill they imagine they are under the influence of Coen (their devil,) and become exceedingly dispirited. Their low diet, however, and water drink, go far to keep down inflammatory action, and they therefore sometimes recover from attacks that would destroy persons in a more artificial state; but still, the too frequent exposure of their naked bodies to the chill of night (for they seldom sleep under cover unless it rains) and the sudden changes of the atmosphere, produce

frequent attacks of catarrh, and I think it is to this circumstance, as well as to the early maturity common in all warm countries, that so few old people are to be seen amongst them.

The natives at Port Stephens were perfectly alive to the effects of medicine upon them, when administered by white people; and when they were unwell, generally sent some one of their family to inform me, and sometimes would themselves go to "soccator." But whether at home or abroad I always gave them, when they came to me, a dose of aperient medicine, in double the quantity which a white person would have required, then caused them to be wrapped up warm, and assisted the medicine by a plentiful supply of warm tea; after this they very seldom had occasion to apply a second time, but if they did I never saw an instance where perseverance in that course did not effect a cure, without having recourse to phlebotomy. They have, however, some faith in the latter operation, and occasionally bleed themselves, when unwell, at the upper extremity of the arm, near the shoulder joint, by scratching or cutting themselves with shells, as they never proceed the length of opening a vein; I have no idea that they ever experience much relief from the operation. It is, however, I believe, more frequently done to relieve rheumatic pains than for any thing else. I know of no diseases that prevail amongst the children but those I have mentioned as common to their parents. Neither small-pox, measles, nor hooping-cough are known amongst them, nor do these diseases exist amongst the white children in Australia, whether European or native. An epidemic, assuming the character of an inflammatory catarrh, prevails perhaps once in three or five years: its effects

have proved destructive to many people advanced in life, and possessing, perhaps, weak or inflammatory constitutions ; but the alarm regarding its effects in general are not, I believe, universal among the inhabitants.

Dysentery prevails amongst both blacks and whites occasionally, but it is not of a virulent nature, and Europeans, although liable to it on their first arrival, seldom experience any inconvenience from it afterwards.

I never saw any natural deformities, either in the children or the grown people, and this always gave me reason to suppose that their mothers destroyed any deformed offspring as soon as born ; still I never could get any acknowledgment of it, nor could I learn from any one at Port Stephens that such a practice existed. I have heard it asserted that the natives always destroy their half caste or mulatto children. Such things may have happened, but I have seen mulatto children of both sexes in the same state as their black friends, on Mr. John M'Arthur's farm in the cow-pasture. They are also to be seen in every district of which I know any thing ; and notwithstanding the general fidelity of the natives to each other, the husband is exceedingly proud of a white child as he calls it. The habits of these half castes are the same as their parents, and I know of no serious attempts that have been made to civilize them. I never saw or heard of any person being either deaf or dumb ; and what is still more extraordinary, I never met one instance of blindness, or that it had ever been heard of amongst the natives of Port Stephens. I have no idea that such persons would be destroyed, because I think the natural affections of the people are too strong to admit of such a practice. Their sight is evidently much stronger than ours, which may be accounted for by their

habits, and by their not attaining any thing like an age in which decay of sight is common with Europeans. If a child cries at any time, in consequence of its parents not complying with its desires, no notice is taken of it unless very young, even though its voice be raised to the highest pitch, till the passionate little urchin is tired out by its own violence. The most striking instance I ever saw of the extent to which passion can rage in a human being, was produced by the following circumstance. I was about to proceed up the river Karuah in my boat, which was to be rowed as usual by six fine stout fellows, who styled themselves "Boat-crew belonging to corbon massa." One of them, named Walker, had promised his little son (a boy of seven years old) to take him in the boat with us. I was in the habit of placing a boy behind me in charge of the rudder, and as I never had leisure at any other time to look at a book or a newspaper, one of my motives for making this arrangement, was to afford me the opportunity of reading in my boat. The office of steersman was always competed for amongst the boys, and three were generally present, who relieved each other in the boat; there was also a seventh man, who stood on the forecastle, holding a spear with which to dart at the fish as we cut through the water. This was a pleasure which they enjoyed exceedingly, and which served to divert them during their labour at the oar. Walker's little boy was not present when we were ready to go; and as there were two others in the boat, and I had not been informed of the promise, we started without him. The poor little fellow, however, soon made his appearance, and began crying and calling after us. Our track lay for above half a mile along the shore, and as we proceeded he kept pace

with us, vociferating and remonstrating in such attitudes of passion, as led me to believe several times that he would either throw himself headlong into the water, or dash himself upon the shoal-rocks which extended into it. I several times ordered the boy at the helm to put about and take him in, while Walker sat without showing the least concern, nodding his head at the little boatswain at the helm to keep his course, remarking at the same time to me, "Nebber mind, massa, nebber mind; dat leab off by and bye; too much cry about always." At length the little fellow on shore stopped and threw both his arms up and down, screaming and stamping, and bending his body with the greatest violence, then threw himself on his face upon the ground, beating it with his hands and apparently attempting to bite it; after which he jumped up again, and tearing his very hair in the extremity of rage, ran towards the shore as if to plunge into the water, at the margin of which, however, he stopped short and repeated his frantic expressions, till a native who had been attracted by his noise, came up and laid hold of him, when the ferocious little savage began kicking his legs about, and scratching the man's face, who at length was obliged to drop him; he then ran towards the shore again, while all the blacks in the boat set up a laugh, except Walker, who merely smiled, and repeated very quickly, "Nebber mind, nebber mind." The black ashore, however, took him up in good earnest the second time, and ended the scene by running away with him under his arm.

It has generally been supposed that chieftainship exists amongst the natives of Australia. I can, however, confidently assert that it was not mentioned amongst any of the people with whom I was acquainted. Each tribe is

divided into independent families which acknowledge no chief, and which inhabit in common a district within certain limits, generally not exceeding above ten or twelve miles on any side. The numbers of each tribe vary very much, being greater on the coast, where they sometimes amount to two or three hundred, and I have known them in other quarters not to exceed one hundred.

The families belonging to a tribe meet together upon occasions of festivals at certain seasons, and also to consult upon all important occasions. But although they have a community of interests at such meeting, still each family has its own fire and provides its own subsistence; except in a general kangaroo hunt, where the game is impounded and taken in large quantities, when it is fairly divided.

Their festivals are very similar in their intentions to the wakes or feasts which exist in many parts of England. Their objects are to feast and dance together for several days, and it is here that the painted bodies, the garnished and mop-like heads, and the harlequin step, are to be seen in perfection at their corrobories. At one season of the year they assemble at a place where they can all procure oysters, and sometimes they meet, as they say, to "patter bungwall," or fern-root; at other times they meet where they can all feast upon menmy, or gigantic lily, when in season, or upon the kangaroo. Upon these occasions it would be difficult to prevail upon any to absent themselves, and there are some who would not be induced to stay away by any persuasions or bribes that could be offered, more especially the younger members and the children.

There are other established customs which, as I have

shown, in some instances are complied with as matters of course, and there are certain leading characters who have more influence than others amongst the multitude when assembled, as is the case in every community, but no one is invested with or assumes any authority whatever over the tribe. At Port Stephens those men (if of mature age) possessed the largest share of influence who could speak the most English, or who were supposed to have the greatest interest with me. And if I could have found any one amongst them sufficiently intelligent and stable to maintain his influence and authority, the whole tribe there, and many others also, would, I have not the least doubt, have acknowledged him as a chief, and obeyed him by virtue of my appointment. The circumstance of their not being a vindictive people is much in their favour as regards any attempts to civilize them. However much they may have been ill-treated upon many occasions, I have shown that they are ready to forgive upon being soothed and reasoned with, and that they are disposed also to follow the advice, and respect the authority of those who steadily and consistently take any interest in them. If, therefore, they have capacities, as I trust the preceding pages will testify, the qualities I have mentioned must form a weighty consideration with regard to any measures which might be contemplated for their benefit. I could relate numerous and remarkable instances in addition to those I have already given, as proofs of the extreme mildness of their disposition; not indeed arising, as many people assert, from want of susceptibility, but the reverse; for when any assaults were committed upon them by the convicts, they came instantly to me to complain, and although they were always exceedingly angry and agitated while telling their

story, the extent of their wish for revenge was merely that I would "blow it up," and beyond this I never in any such instances knew it to proceed.

Nothing is more common than to hear persons, who are in a great measure ignorant of the facts from which alone any just conclusions can be drawn, giving their prejudiced opinions of these harmless beings, and assigning them over to everlasting degradation with as much confidence as if they were in the full possession of all that could be known or effected upon the subject. This unfair conduct has arisen from such parties not having taken the proper means to collect that information upon which alone any correct opinions could be formed upon so difficult a subject; and it is singular how little has been known even by the oldest settlers of the characters of the aborigines of this country in their natural state, beyond the few beggar families which wander from house to house, after their country has been taken from them, and whose native simplicity has been exchanged for the drunken and degraded habits acquired amongst civilized people.

It is not sufficient merely as a passing traveller to see an aboriginal people in their woods and forests, to form a just estimate of their real character and capabilities, or even to see them in a settled part of the country, where they receive an impression at one house to-day, which is confirmed in the mind or driven out of it by what takes place at the next house to-morrow; and where no person takes any particular interest about a people who possess neither the unsophisticated habits of a savage state, nor any of the estimable qualities of civilized life. To know them well it is necessary to see much more of them in their native wilds, and especially in situations where their

natural dispositions have been uniformly acted upon by the example of the better part of European conduct. In this position I believe no man has ever yet been placed, although that in which I stood approached more nearly to it than any other known in that country. The settlers in general, and other individuals, may be well disposed towards them when in contact with them, but then there are few individuals who have been able, even if willing, to sacrifice their time and property in situations and under circumstances that could alone have enabled them to acquire an accurate knowledge of the real character of the natives as a people, or to do them any permanent good; and no opportunities have therefore been afforded for forming opinions to be relied upon as to the possibility of effecting improvement amongst them. But admitting that all were as satisfied as myself of their being capable of civilization, even then the mode of effecting it, is a subject beset on every side with difficulties, and requires the most profound consideration.

I have long been of opinion, that wherever the location of a country is commenced in the usual way, no means can be devised of preserving the aborigines from final destruction. I am aware of the many unsuccessful attempts to locate individuals of this race even when taken from their friends at an early age, and under circumstances which, according to our notions, ought to have insured success, and will here instance the strongest case of the kind that came under my own knowledge.

Two boys, (aboriginals,) at a very early age, were placed at the Orphan School near Liverpool, where they were treated and educated in the same manner as the rest of the boys. Being in the neighbourhood of that

establishment in the year 1826, I introduced myself to the Rev. Mr. Cartwright, who was then master of the school, and who did me the favour to conduct me over it. I there saw the youths, who were about twelve or thirteen years of age. I made some very particular enquiries concerning them, and received from Mr. Cartwright the gratifying information that they were by no means deficient either in capacity or application, and were not behind other boys of their age in acquirements. He also informed me that their native friends had been allowed to visit them occasionally, but as they appeared much attached to him, he had the strongest hopes that they would form exceptions to the trials which had previously been made. I heard no more of them after this for about eighteen months, when I visited the establishment again, and was informed that they had gone off to the forest, where they remained with their friends. When one sees how attractive (and to youth especially) are the pleasures of a hunter's life, and the freedom which a native enjoys in so delightful a climate, in open forests like those of Australia, where the means of subsistence are in abundance, and where none, or at least very few of the hardships are experienced which attend the same state of existence in most other countries, it is less a subject of wonder that these aboriginal schoolboys should have been fired and led to break from their restraints by the enticing picture of liberty, which without doubt their friends had so frequently placed before them. And can it be supposed for a moment that their friends, satisfied as they were in their original state, should have stifled all their natural feelings, and given up their offspring for ever without using their persuasions to entice them back?

But the question as to intellect I think must now be set at rest in their favour, and if any doubt still exists as to the possibility of *taming* them, I hope some humane individuals who can afford it, will endeavour to try the experiment in civilized Europe, away from the allurements of their friends, their forests, and their kangaroos. If, however, they are not, as *some* assert, of the same creation, and therefore a different species of humanity; or if, as others think, they are only a third, fourth, or fifth link in the same creation, and the nearest of all to the monkey or the orang-outang tribe, and therefore incapable of enjoying the same state of intellectual existence as themselves, all experiments would be useless. But happily for the natives all their white brethren do not entertain these degrading and absurd opinions; and some of them, I doubt not, will still be found to consider and feel for these fellow-creatures as they deserve. To such it may be some satisfaction to learn, that the instances I have adduced of the difficulty of taming them can be contrasted with two of an opposite tendency, which came quite accidentally within my knowledge, and which can be equally well attested.

I was once riding from Sydney to Botany Bay, and not far from the latter place, saw coming towards me a black man, with an exceedingly clean dress, consisting of a short white smock-frock, with a blue linen collar turned down, a coloured neckerchief tied round his neck, a pair of white trousers, and a good hat; he had also a stick across his shoulder, with several wild-ducks upon it. Seeing him so neat and orderly, I took him in the first instance for a foreign black, but on observing him more closely, saw that he was a native, and about twenty years of age.

I felt too much interest in such an unexpected sight not to stop him and to ask him many questions. He spoke our language as plainly and as intelligibly as an Englishman, and informed me he was a labourer, and usually worked at Botany Bay for Mr. Gordon Brown, who was then with me. He said that Mr. Brown having nothing for him to do at that time, he had been employing himself in shooting ducks, to carry to the Sydney market; that he never was idle, and did not mind what he did so that he could turn an honest penny. I remarked how clean his dress was, and asked who washed it for him. He always did it himself, he said, and endeavoured to be as clean as he could when he went to town.

Notwithstanding these consistent answers and his appearance, I was sceptical as to the uniformity of his habits, and remarked to him that I supposed he went amongst his black friends occasionally. "Oh, yes!" he replied, "I go now and then and have a yarn with them; but I never stay long, they drink too much for me." I asked him to go with me to Port Stephens to teach the blacks there to do as he did, telling him that I would treat him kindly and send him home again when he wished it. "The blacks," he said, "are too wild there for me, or I should like very well to go:" and I could not succeed in persuading him to accompany me there.

After I had taken my leave of him I asked Mr. Brown whether his account of himself was correct. Mr. Brown informed me that it was perfectly so; that the man was an excellent fellow, with whom he would not part on any account.

The second case was that of a lad who had attached himself to, and was employed by the Badgerys, who had farms

in different districts of the colony. His business generally was to drive the cattle between the farms, and at other times he was made useful in any thing that was required of him. I saw the lad myself in Mr. Badgery's house, and received the account of him from Mr. Badgery and his sons, who informed me that he had been a considerable time in their service; that he appeared completely to have severed himself from his old friends, and showed no disposition to return, although he was frequently in the habit of meeting them. He was exceedingly shy in his habits towards people with whom he was not acquainted, and it was with some difficulty he could be prevailed upon to enter the room to speak to me.

I saw also at Mr. Simeon Lord's woollen cloth factory at Botany Bay, several very fine black native boys employed at spinning and other work, in common with white children. The superintendent told me they performed their tasks as well as the others did; that they were constant attendants, except when they were reprimanded too severely, when they would absent themselves for a time, and return when their anger had subsided. There can be no doubt upon the mind of any one, I think, that this would have been the conduct of the white children too, if they could as easily have made themselves independent. The wonder is, that boys who have liberty, and can enjoy it when they please, should submit to the constant confinement and drudgery inconsistent with the natural desires of all beings for liberty, and which no civilized white man would endure one moment longer than he could fairly get rid of them.

The real habits and dispositions of the natives are so

little known or attended to, even in Sydney, that the most absurd stories are sometimes circulated and believed concerning them. A party having been shipwrecked upon one occasion on the coast, a little north of Port Macquarie, reported, on their return, that they had seen a number of white aborigines, armed with bows and arrows; and the story being doubted, they made depositions as to the fact. The country where these wonderful people were beheld is pretty well known now; but the white men have taken their departure from it if they ever existed, and left neither bows nor arrows behind them. I have seen an account also in print, of the natives near Port Macquarie being whiter than they are further south. I have seen great numbers of the natives from that quarter, and have conversed with many white people who have seen them also, but my own experience, and what I have learned from others, warrant me in contradicting such an assertion.

I received once a letter from a gentlemen in office in Sydney, stating that it had been reported to him, that several white men had been killed and eaten at Port Stephens by the natives, and that he was informed I had the means of ascertaining the fact. I certainly was enabled to ascertain that nothing of the kind had ever taken place, nor had I, until the receipt of the letter in question, even heard of it. It was the duty, however, of that officer to make the enquiry after the manner in which the story had been carried to him; and I was exceedingly glad to have it in my power to contradict a tale which was fabricated solely to excite a prejudice against the natives there.

It has been also said, that the natives behind the

mountains speak of their brethren on some parts of the coast as white cannibals. The natives of all parts of the colony speak of the distant tribes, or those with whom they are at enmity, as cannibals. Whether these be so or not, I know that the natives feel they cannot, in any way, so much degrade their enemies in the eyes of white people, as by calling them cannibals, and that those at Port Stephens have given this character to some of their neighbours, who are no more deserving of it than themselves. I have seen the natives from the coast far south of Sydney, and thence to Morton Bay, comprising a line of coast six or seven hundred miles; and I have also seen them in the interior of Argyleshire and Bathurst, as well as in the districts of the Hawksbury, Hunter's River, and Port Stephens, and have no reason whatever to doubt that they are all the same people. From the Hawksbury to Port Macquarie they speak the same language on the coast, with some slight variation: how far this extends towards the north of Port Macquarie I cannot say, but at Morton Bay, as well as in Argyleshire and Bathurst, the languages differ. It was formerly supposed that the Blue Mountain Range prevented any means of communication between the natives of the coast-line and those west of that range, and that they were therefore not the same people; but this is not the fact, for a communication has recently been discovered between Bathurst and Hunter's River, by which I sent at one time no less than two thousand sheep, with the loss only of one of them. In conversing with some of the natives west of the Blue Mountain range, (about a hundred miles from Port Stephens,) I discovered several words which had the same sound and signification as at Port Stephens, although the language

was different. I found also the straight silky hair and general colour and features of the natives, to be every where the same ; and their manners, habits, and war-like instruments so clearly resembling each other, as to leave no doubt of their having sprung from one common origin. I have conversed with different persons who have travelled the extremes of New Holland, as well as many of the intermediate parts, and they also agree that the tribes are all from the same stock. Those of Argyleshire and Bathurst have cloaks made of the kangaroo skins, very neatly stitched together with a kind of thong made from the sinews of the kangaroo tails. North of Sydney, *immediately on the coast*, where it is warmer, I never saw any of these; but not more than thirty miles inland from the sea, on the north-west part of the Company's grant, I saw similar cloaks in the possession of the natives, and some of them were brought to the establishment by our natives, after the intercourse which took place between these two tribes through my intervention. The native children whom I saw were all, when born, of a bright copper colour, but many of them changed to black before they were a year old, or rather, to so dark a brown as not easily to be distinguished from black. This alteration of colour, I can assert, was not caused in consequence of rubbing grease or dirt in the skin, because, although this is sometimes done, it is not always practised, and the children therefore attained their darkest colour from natural, not artificial causes. Neither do the men and women always rub their bodies over with grease and dirt ; and as they are a great deal in the water during the warm weather, when their skins are perfectly clean, I had numerous opportunities of observing their different shades. The mass of them

are black, or very dark brown; but there are some of a brightish copper colour, and between this and the darkest shade, all the intermediate tints are to be seen amongst them. Whatever may be asserted, there are, as far as I could observe, no tribes of uniform copper colour in any parts of the colony. The difference of colour is casual, and frequently found in members of the same family: the hair, however, *never* varies, being uniformly straight and black. The cause of these variations remains to be explained; but I see no reason to impute it to a mixture of races in this particular people, while similar differences exist in the aborigines of many other countries; the fact may fairly be referred to the accidental varieties which we observe throughout the whole economy of nature.

The natives inhabiting some of the islands in Torres Straits, which separate New Guinea from New Holland, and especially those of Murray's Island, appear also to belong to the same race of people as the Australians: they resemble each other in their straight hair, in their features and colour, and in many of their habits; but instead of spears, those of the islands use bows and arrows, probably the original weapons of war of the Australians, and likely enough to have been retained in the islands, while they gave place to the spear on the main land.

If the present race, as has been surmised, were a cross between the woolly-haired negro of New Guinea and the Malay, we ought to see some of the varieties which such a mixture would have produced. That characteristic of the New Guinea negro, the woolly hair, would surely in such a case be frequently met with amongst

the Australians; but as I never witnessed any thing of the kind, I cannot but believe that they are the unmixed descendants of the Malays, to whom they bear a closer resemblance in colour, hair, and features, than to any other people.

The mothers in Australia sometimes flatten the noses of their infants, and in this feature therefore they occasionally resemble the negro. This custom however, like many others, is not universal, and the nose, in its natural state, is sometimes aquiline, although it varies as much as that feature usually does in Europeans. Their eyes are deep sunken, and their eye-balls, or rather that portion which is commonly called the white of the eye, is of a dusky colour, and generally speckled with dark brown spots. Their sight is remarkably strong, although their eye is not particularly animated, unless lighted up by any peculiar excitement. That part of the bridge of the nose immediately connected with the forehead, is often suddenly depressed, while the forehead, in the situation of the frontal bone, shelves over considerably; and in some cases I have seen the high, open forehead of the European. The arms and legs, both of the men and women, are long and slender—the hands and feet of the middle size; but the latter, especially those of the men, are broad and muscular, in consequence of being unconfined by shoes. They are of various statures: I have seen men of six feet two or three inches, and of all the intermediate gradations down to five feet; but they are, upon the whole, rather a tall race. Dwarfs are extremely rare: I never saw more than one, who was a female; nor did I ever witness a case of corpulency in either sex. Many of the women are well formed, broad over the loins,

slender in the waist, with a full and expanded chest. Some of the young ones, as well as the men, are exceedingly good-looking; and the sexes are modest in an extraordinary degree in their deportment towards each other.

In attempting to explain the origin of these people, it does not appear to me necessary, as Mr. Cunningham has done, to mix the Malays with the negroes of New Guinea, and afterwards to drive the New Guinea men across the continent of New Holland, in order to account for their presence in Van Dieman's Land. It is quite possible, I think, that the negroes of New Guinea might have reached the shores of Van Dieman's Land through the communication of those of New Holland, and the assistance of canoes, after the latter country was inhabited by the present race of people. If they had been accidentally cast on the shores of Australia, and found these occupied by a hostile people, they would naturally have staid no longer on the spot where they first landed, than was necessary to procure a subsistence, and on being disturbed, would have coasted on from place to place, till they reached a district without inhabitants, and there rested as at Van Dieman's Land. Those who are acquainted with the manner in which savages can use canoes near the coast, even in a heavy sea, can easily imagine the possibility, and even probability of what I have stated; and if it is objected, that the aborigines of Van Dieman's Land do not (as I am aware) now know the use of canoes, I have only to observe, that this could not have been the case *originally*, or they must have been created there, which I cannot believe. They could not have proceeded even from the nearest point of Australia to Van Dieman's

Land without canoes, and they certainly could not have reached that island from any other quarter without them, whether they were the aborigines of Australia or not. But these people as clearly resemble the woolly-haired negroes of New Guinea in all their characteristics of colour, form, and features, as one people can resemble another, considering the distance and difference of climate; and as Van Dieman's Land lies at one extremity of Australia, and New Guinea at the other, there is, I think, much less difficulty in accounting for the peopling of Van Dieman's Land immediately from New Guinea, as I have described, than there is to explain in what manner the inhabitants of New Zealand, and some others of the South Sea Islands, were conveyed to those places.

An instance recently came within my knowledge which will in some degree serve to illustrate the possibility of coasting and landing occasionally for water and food during a long journey along the shores of a hostile and savage people. In the year 1828, Captain Leary of the brig *Woodlark*, with his passengers and crew, were wrecked on a coral rock a considerable distance from the coast of New Holland, and on reaching it in their boat, found that they were four or five hundred miles north of the penal settlement of Morton Bay, which was the nearest place from which any relief could be expected. The captain, his chief mate Mr. Ryan, (with whom I afterwards sailed from Sydney to the Mauritius,) several of his crew, and two female passengers, (one of whom had an infant at her breast,) left the reef in a boat unarmed, and with no more than one day's provisions. The boat had been almost dashed to pieces on the rock, and was kept together only by a piece of tarpawling passed round her, and

it was with much difficulty they could keep her from sinking. They fortunately, however, reached the shore, and afterwards coasted along in their crazy bark, as near to land as possible, landing from time to time in search of water and rock-oysters to subsist upon, and to rest their weary and emaciated frames. But before they could take their full portion of rest on shore, or procure all the subsistence they wished, they were in every instance disturbed by the natives, and obliged to move off in their boat, which fortunately held together till they all landed in safety at Morton Bay. If Europeans, including a nursing mother, could perform this under such privations and dangers, how much more easily might the natives, either of New Guinea or New Holland, have run the whole extent of the coast. They not only could have subsisted themselves with little trouble, but it would have been easy for them to renew their bark canoes from the trees on the shore, had it become necessary to do so, with little hazard of being taken or destroyed. The identity of the people of Australia furnishes good grounds for concluding that the inhabitants of this immense country originally began to spread from a single point of its coast: and when it is considered that this is every where inhabited, as well as all parts of the interior yet discovered, and that the extent of the shore around the island cannot be less than seven or eight thousand miles, the time which it must have taken for a people in a state of nature to spread themselves over such a space, even as thinly as they have been found in Australia, would, upon a moderate calculation, make them a race of very long standing. From whatever quarter, therefore, they may have come, and whatever may have been their origin, the period of

their arrival on the shores of New Holland is sufficiently ancient to have rendered them a distinct people, and to have caused in them those peculiarities both of mind and form, which time and circumstances have every where produced as the distinguishing characteristics between the several races of mankind.

CHAPTER IX.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE SOIL AND COUNTRY—CAUSES OF FERTILITY
 GENERALLY CONSIDERED—APPARENT ANOMALIES IN AUSTRALIA—
 EXPLAINED—SOILS OF DIFFERENT DISTRICTS DESCRIBED—
 GENERAL VIEW OF THE COUNTRY—MOUNTAIN BARRIER—
 APSLEY WATERFALL—COUNTRY ABOUT BATHURST—WELLING-
 TON VALLEY—MACQUARIE RIVER—INTERIOR OF AUSTRALIA
 STILL UNKNOWN—MORTON BAY—BRISBANE RIVER—DIFFERENT
 DESCRIPTION OF TIMBER AT MORTON BAY—NATIVE TRIBES
 AT THAT PLACE—ANECDOTES—ARTICLES OF NATIVE MANUFAC-
 TURE.

THE descriptions given of the country as I saw it, during my various journeys in the Port Stephen's district, are not to be considered as applicable to the country in general. There are, it is true, many parts of the colony equally interesting, and some even more striking in point of scenery, although these are not often to be met with. It should also be recollected, that my object was to follow the courses of the rivers which are every where accompanied by varied and romantic scenery, as well as the richest soil and herbage, the latter commencing almost universally at the point where navigation ceases. This singular fact is at variance with what generally obtains in most, if not in all other quarters of the globe, where some of the richest and most valuable tracts of country are found at and near the mouths of rivers. The geological

features of the new country have not in general been found to vary from the order in which they exist in Europe ; but if the causes which produce soil in all quarters of the world are duly examined and considered, we shall cease to wonder at the difference which exists in this respect between Australia and most countries in the northern hemisphere.

The surface of Britain, as well as other parts of Europe, previous to its being cultivated, was almost everywhere covered with wood, to the decayed remains of which, and other vegetable substances, a very considerable portion of its fertility may be ascribed. The quantity and quality of the soils through which streams have for ages flowed, must therefore be in proportion to the quantity and nature of the soils which have existed on the surface of the more elevated parts of the surrounding country, from which portions of it have been gradually conveyed by the waters to the lower grounds, and also by the tributary to the main streams, which overflowing their banks from time to time, have either accumulated these rich portions of the earth's surface in considerable masses, or spread them more widely, according to the situation of the country or the extent of its waters.

The causes of fertility in all unoccupied countries are to be discovered only in decayed vegetable matter, or decomposed rocks, and sometimes in an admixture of both. The amount of the former depends, in a great measure, upon the quantity and species of wood which the soil, in a state of nature, produces. If a country, as England originally was, were covered with deciduous trees and underwood, it is reasonable to suppose that the fallen leaves and natural decay of its wood would form soils much more

rapidly than in Australia, where there is no underwood, where the trees in the forest are perennial, where the climate is so dry that the thin, tall grasses are annually consumed by the fires of the natives, and the soil repaid only by the small evanescent residuum, which is left in the shape of potass.

In England we see vallies and low grounds of vast extent at the mouths of rivers, as well as at a distance from them, overspread with soil of the richest description, and which is frequently composed of the debris of rocks, of which the neighbouring hills are composed, intermixed also with vegetable remains. In the old country it is laid down as a general rule, that land in such situations must be good ; but in the new world the reverse is generally the case. The causes, however, of such an apparent irregularity are every where to be seen in Australia by attentive observers, and cannot I think be mistaken. One of these causes, as I have already explained, consists in the absence of decayed vegetables, the others are referable to the qualities of the primitive and secondary rocks, which are common in almost every quarter of the colony which I visited, and especially near the coast. The surface of the vallies is generally covered with the debris of granite and porphyry rocks, and is poor in proportion to the depth of the covering which rests upon a retentive subsoil of sour clay, while the table-land on the tops of the hills, where the rock lies in detached portions, is generally more fertile than the valleys.

This is to be accounted for in some measure from the fires not consuming the grass in those situations, so frequently as in others, and from the vegetable remains being retained and shaded, (as well as the ashes, when the fires

extend so far,) between the interstices of the rocks, which blending with the former during their gradual decay, form soils of greater or less fertility in proportion to the quantity of the fertilizing matter deposited.

The growth of the grasses in these situations is also much encouraged by the loose rocks shading the soil and preserving moisture in it, as well as by the substances before described: and although the greater accumulations of pulverized rock in the vallies and lower parts of these hills are parched by the summer's sun, and yield comparatively thin and sour grasses, still the higher parts of the hills being generally covered with detached angular stones, (increasing in quantity as the ground rises,) grow gradually more fertile towards their summits, and produce on their table surfaces an abundant crop of sweeter herbage, while the tops of hills of similar form and elevation, in Great Britain, are usually covered with moss or turbary.

At the mouths of the principal rivers in Australia the country is generally low, and consists of mud flats, salt marshes, and sandy swamps, for several miles, when it alternates to the limits of navigation, between extensive reedy swamps, small hollows or flats, and moderately elevated granite, porphyry, or sandstone hills, whose sides and summits are almost without exception clothed with timber and grasses of the description already given. On leaving the banks of the rivers the country is generally found to be of a broken description, and between the hills are narrow valleys and flats of greater extent, composed of the debris of the rocks; and yielding frequently a very weak and sour kind of grass, interspersed with a species of bulrush called grass-trees, which are universal signs of

poverty. Others bear a more productive and sweeter kind of herbage, consisting of thin tufts of the tall oat-grass, which present to the eye a fresh and rich surface, and such as generally deceives a stranger both as to its quality and actual produce.

A few miles from the point where navigation ceases, and where the salt water invariably terminates, small districts of low hills are generally found of several miles in extent, along the banks of the principal rivers and their branches. These hills are often covered with a deep rich soil of decayed argillaceous rock, and sometimes diverge five or six miles from the banks, although generally not more than one-third or one-fourth of that distance, when they abruptly cease, and are succeeded by a similar country, (although generally somewhat better,) to that which preceded them within the district of the tide. In this manner the soils alternate on the banks of the rivers and streams, at whose sources the country rises into mountains, and dividing ranges of considerable elevation, formed chiefly of the porphyry rocks and soils as before mentioned. Nearly all the salt-water rivers are navigable for about twenty miles only; scarcely any go beyond it, and the greater portion on the eastern side of the Blue Mountains, which are not above sixty miles from the coast, do not rise more than thirty miles in a direct line from the sea, although in their tortuous courses they may sometimes exceed sixty.

The low rich hills which are formed on the banks of rivers above the navigable waters, are composed of some of the richest soil in the world. A similar irregularity however frequently prevails here, although from apparently different causes; the valleys being poor, while the

tops of the hills and the higher grounds immediately connected with the vales are in the highest degree fertile. Masses of rich black mould of several feet in depth are found on the summits of these hills, resting upon a clay subsoil. The mould is clearly formed of decayed argillaceous rock, of which detached portions, in a half pulverized state, are found on the surface and intermixed in the soil below it. The decomposition is sometimes so recent as not to have afforded time for much of the soil to be carried down by the action of the waters to the adjoining low grounds, nor even in some instances to spread it over the sides of the hills for more than half way down, while huge masses of the same kind of rock, both solid and detached, are often found in an undecayed state on the top of an adjoining hill, whose meagre herbage, in comparison with that of its neighbour, sufficiently explains the state of the rock without further investigation. On examining however the soil at the base of these rocks, I have uniformly found it to be formed of materials similar to the others. This was also denoted by the luxuriant herbage with which patches of it were covered immediately round the base of the rocks, while small portions of these were seen scattered about in the last stage of decay, and crumbled, as I took them up, into dust between my fingers.

In other cases, and within view of these described, the natural process of decay and division over the lower grounds, had taken place to a considerable extent, forming soil from six to twelve inches deep; but in no instance did I discover the valleys to contain one-half the depth of rich mould which was retained on the tops of the hills from which those valleys had been supplied.

The origin of these rocks must, I imagine, be referred to the date of some catastrophe, which, however remote, without doubt left the hills in nearly the same form as that in which I saw them. Why a dissolution of them should have occurred at such different periods, and what are the causes which have so long retarded the decomposition of other parts of them in similar situations, I leave to others more learned than I am in these matters to determine.

In that district of occupied country which lies between the barrier range, or what is called the Blue Mountains, and the coast, the prevailing rocks and soils are granite, porphyry, and sandstone, with the exception of the country for a considerable distance west and south-west of Sydney, which is of a lower and more undulating description, and of which the surface consists chiefly of unproductive clays. The argillaceous rocks before described, and the productive soils that are the produce of them, are confined principally to the districts north of Sydney, or rather of the river Hawksbury, and are found only in patches in the neighbourhood of the rivers. Freestone, indurated and slaty clay, ironstone, quartz, &c. also occasionally appear on the surface; and coal, with the accompanying sandstone rock, is found on several parts of the coast, especially at Read's Mistake and Newcastle, from which it has been traced in a north-westerly direction as far as the rivers Gloucester and Barrington on the northern side of the Australian Agricultural Company's grant. Several rocks of primitive and secondary limestone have likewise been discovered in the upper districts of Hunter's River; and recently on Patterson's River, at the extreme point of navigation, limestone has been found on the estate of

Mr. Broughton, where alone it can be obtained by others on the coast without the trouble and expense of land-carriage.

Having endeavoured to convey as accurate an idea as I can of the face of the country *generally* on the coast or east side of the Blue Mountains, I shall proceed now to describe such parts of it on the western side of them as I am acquainted with; after which I shall return to the coast-line, in order to show the value and local advantages of the several districts there, in comparison with each other, and then compare the advantages and prospects which the two countries respectively, east and west of these barrier mountains, afford to persons who are desirous of emigrating.

I have already explained, in my introduction to this work, that the coast of Australia is girded by a chain or ridge of hills, leaving, between it and the sea, a zone not exceeding sixty miles in breadth. This barrier on the eastern shores is elevated between two and three thousand feet above the level of the sea, and consists generally of a succession of hills or ridges, making obtuse and sometimes acute angles with each other; and which being united only at certain points, the traveller is obliged to pursue the line of communication by winding his course accordingly, thereby avoiding the deep gullies and chasms which lie yawning between the angles of the ridges; and although the breadth of these ridges may not, if the route could be followed in a direct line, exceed thirty miles, the only practicable passage across them is not less than fifty miles.

The ascent from the eastern side, near the government establishment at Emu Plains, is not difficult, the passage

over having been much facilitated by the attention which has been paid to the road or track by the colonial government. There are some difficulties, however, which cannot be surmounted without incurring considerable expence, especially in descending from the western side of a high mountain, called Mount York, which is so precipitous, that a loaded carriage cannot safely proceed down without attaching to it behind a tree with its branches, in order to prevent the carriage from overpowering the horses in front. I was myself a witness of this operation; and at the western base of this mountain, which exceeds three thousand feet above the level of the sea, I also saw a party of convicts employed in sawing up and burning the timber, which had thus, from time to time, been taken down.

The rocks of which this barrier range is formed, consist chiefly of sand-stone, free-stone, and porphyry. Thin patches and scattered tufts of grass are occasionally seen upon them, and a few of the hollows afford sufficient grass and water to preserve animals proceeding over them from actual starvation; while, with few exceptions, they are clothed in every direction with stunted timber of the eucalyptus, or gum species. On the left of the track, and especially near a place called "The Weather-boarded Hut," about thirty miles on the mountain road from Emu, there are some bare and rugged sandstone mountains, which present scenery of a very romantic and peculiar cast.

It is near this spot that the much-talked-of Apsley Waterfall was discovered. Those travellers however who wish to gratify themselves with a sight of it, must take care to visit the spot during the rainy season, otherwise they

will probably see nothing more than the frightful abyss without the water.

After the descent from Mount York has been accomplished, the passage of the Blue Mountain barrier is considered at an end, although I found many difficult ups and downs before I accomplished the remaining forty miles to Bathurst, and particularly in my passage in the dark over the top of the mountain called Mount Blaxland; which from that circumstance, as well as from the hospitable character of the highly respected family whose name it bears, I shall not easily forget. From the manner in which the country on that side of the mountains had always been described to me, I had pictured to myself something very superior to what I had before seen; but the character of the country from the foot of Mount York, for several miles towards Bathurst, is that of a poor soil, of a sandy nature, with a low, undulating surface, bearing herbage of inferior quality. The timber is similar to that on soils of the same description on the eastern side of the mountains; and the low honeysuckle tree or banksia, (an almost certain sign of sand and poverty,) was every where to be seen; and also the dwarf cypress, which I had seldom observed in any other part of the colony. The hills in the distance, as I passed over this low district, were picturesque, and denoted a broken country on all sides. Very few settlers were located in this neighbourhood, which appeared occupied by cattle only: the greater part of these belonged, I believe, to the person who kept an inn at no great distance from the foot of Mount York.

The country after this, to within ten or twelve miles of Bathurst, is broken, and the hills in general are rather

elevated, rising sometimes into mountains, the nature of whose timber, herbage, and soil, give no indications of riches, and accordingly there are but few locations to be met with for the first thirty miles from the Mountain Barrier towards Bathurst; and most of these even appear to be occupied more for the conveniences of the public track, than from any prospects which they afford of prosperity to their owners.

About twelve miles from the settlement of Bathurst, the plains make their appearance, with a low, undulating surface, free from timber; while the quality of the soil gradually improves as the Macquarie River and the settlement are approached. The soil consists of a rich friable loam of a reddish cast, and affords pasturage for numerous flocks and herds. It is well watered by the Macquarie, which meanders through the plains, unadorned by wood of any description on its banks. The contrast between this rich and open tract of country, of at least thirty thousand acres, and the poor tracts which lie between it and the Blue Mountains, produces a pleasing effect, which is also heightened to the mind of a stranger by distant and broken ranges of wooded hills on every side.

The face of this fine and interesting country is not much diversified by the labours of man, although every part of it is located. It is too far distant from a market, and the country between it and the coast is of too difficult a nature for the transport of grain to Sydney with any hope of profit to the cultivator; and consequently, no settler attempts to raise corn in any quantity beyond the wants of his own establishment, although both the climate and soil are far more favourable to its

production than in any other quarter of the colony. There are some good sheep-walks on these plains, where considerable quantities of excellent cheese have been made, and sent to Sydney: some good specimens of wool have also been produced upon the neighbouring hills. These are the only commodities which the settlers on that side of the mountains have to give, in exchange for the tea, sugar, clothing, and other articles which they require; and I fear the competition in cheese between them and the Hunter's River settlers in so limited a market, will soon reduce the price of this article so low, as to deprive the farmer of much of the benefit he has hitherto derived from that part of his produce.

The country SW. W. and N. beyond Bathurst Plains, is broken, and rather lightly timbered, almost every where easy of access, and is by far the finest grazing and sheep country in the colony. Notwithstanding this, it is really surprising to find how little of it is fit for cultivation in comparison with its extent. There is only here and there a patch on the banks of rivers and streams, which any man in his senses would think of placing permanently under the plough; while the greater portion of the country is not at all qualified for culture. At the government station called Wellington Valley, north of Bathurst, on that side of the mountain, there is a considerable tract of fine land at a still greater distance from Sydney than Bathurst; and in other parts which I visited, seventy or eighty miles west of Bathurst, there are primitive limestone tracts of hills, over which flocks of sheep were grazing in the rudest health.

About one hundred and fifty miles north of Bathurst, to the branch of the Hunter's River called the Goulburn,

the country is elevated and much broken, and with few exceptions, adapted for grazing only. It is, however, not in general heavily timbered, and is almost every where accessible. The Blue Mountain barrier is passed above the Goulburn (which rises on the coast side) without any difficulty; and perhaps I cannot better show the accessibility of the country in this quarter, from Bathurst to Port Stephens, than by stating, that I sent at one time, in August 1827, nearly two thousand young ewes from the former to the latter place, a distance, as they travelled, of three hundred miles, with the loss of only one of them; and the flocks, when they arrived at Port Stephens, from the constant succession of fresh pastures, were in as good condition as when they left Bathurst.

It was formerly supposed that the mountain barrier prevented any communication whatever between these two districts, even to the natives; but this notion, as I have shown, was erroneous.

The river Macquarie, upon which the settlement of Bathurst is placed, takes its rise in the southern country of Argyleshire, and runs in a north-west direction for several hundred miles, till, according to the late surveyor-general, Mr. Oxley, it is lost in a marsh; but in the year 1828, it was traced during a dryer season than that in which Mr. Oxley followed it, and its channel is again discovered at a considerable distance from the spot to which he proceeded. Its waters were, however, found to be salt, and the country about it so barren and destitute of fresh water, that the party was obliged to quit it; thus leaving the question, as to the quarter of the coast at which it falls into the sea, in as much doubt as before. Unless a depôt, or a farm establishment be formed at the

nearest point where fresh water and grass are found, so as thence to provision a party, or a succession of parties, it is obviously impossible that its outlet can be discovered by tracing it down from its source; and even then, the building and transporting a boat from the *depôt* to the river, is the only chance of following it to any considerable distance, and this only provided the navigation shall be found uninterrupted by rocks or falls before it reaches the waters of the ocean. If the river empties itself, as it is supposed by some, on the north-west coast, the waters of the *Macquarie* cannot reach that point across the continent of New Holland, till they have run a distance in their tortuous course of six or seven thousand miles from their source. From the sterility of the country in the neighbourhood of that river, as found by the party who traced it as far as practicable in 1828, and from the *sirocco* winds, which blow from the quarter through which the river is supposed to flow, it is extremely probable that the interior, or a large portion of it, is of a barren, sandy nature, and that future adventurers may be somewhat disappointed in their expectations of finding so rich and productive a country as they have imagined to exist there.

Considering the rage that at present prevails for colonization, and the necessity which is supposed to exist for affording a vent for the surplus population of Great Britain, it is very surprising that no direct attempts should have been made on the part of government to explore the north-west coast of New Holland, with a view of discovering an outlet from the interior; for whether the waters of the *Macquarie* fall into the sea in that direction or not, the form of the country about its coasts, the

observations which have been made by various navigators, and the accounts which have been received from persons who have accidentally been cast upon various parts of the shores of New Holland, all tend to show that the north-west coast is the only quarter where it is probable that the waters can flow into the ocean from behind the barrier ridge which appears to encompass the island on every side, save that of the north-west. Strong currents have been observed to set here from the land, whose surface is low, while its shores are in some places hidden by groups of islands, which are often the effects of great and rapid rivers in their vicinity.

It is not, however, either my business or my intention to discuss the motives, or to remark further upon the apparent neglect of the home government in not attempting to ascertain so interesting and important a point, although I cannot avoid expressing my surprise at the fact.

The settlement of Morton Bay, which was established by the colonial government about seven years ago, and which I visited in September 1828, is situated on the eastern coast, in about lat. 27° , and is north of Sydney about six hundred miles by land. It is a bar harbour, which in smooth water can be entered by vessels of almost any burthen: that in which I entered it being of no less than seven hundred tons. The channel, however, is so extremely narrow as to render it very dangerous to attempt an entrance in rough weather, or without a leading or very favourable wind. The bay is very extensive, and is studded with small and low islands, some of which consist of mud flats covered with mangrove, and others with the tall palm or cabbage-tree; while the low country in every direction on its shores alternates between mud flats, sands,

and sandy swamps. In every place, however, which is sufficiently dry, this country, as in other quarters of the colony, is clothed with timber, as well as shrubs and creeping vines, and a sour, sallow-looking herbage. The pilot's hut and flag-staff, near the entrance of the bay, are the only signs for forty miles of the existence of civilized man; and as the channel across the harbour is not sufficiently deep to admit of vessels of large tonnage, we anchored near the pilot's hut.

At no great distance from this place there is a store situated on the sands. The cargoes of the larger vessels are discharged here, and afterwards taken by schooners of twenty or thirty tons to the settlement forty miles distant, on the river Brisbane, which discharges itself at the western extremity of the bay, about twenty or twenty-five miles from the town.

The country at the mouth of this river is true to its general character in similar situations in the colony; the banks on both sides consisting of low unprofitable grounds for several miles, and alternating afterwards between poor hollows and flats, reedy swamps, and moderately elevated hills of little value, until within a short distance of the settlement, which is pleasantly situated on the right bank of the river. There are several patches of fine flat land near the settlement, but the country about it is generally hilly and by no means fertile, and the soil so porous as to render the production of a crop extremely uncertain in dry seasons, excepting on the low land, of which there is not a great quantity on the banks of the river.

The high mountain range in the distance on the west displays some exceedingly bold and picturesque scenery.

It awakens the curiosity and romantic feelings of the traveller, if he possess any, and seems to invite him to take a peep behind it. The mountain barrier appears to be here accessible at a point called the Gap, about forty miles from the settlement of Brisbane, and, according to Mr. Cunningham, (the king's botanist, whom I met there only a few days after his return from a journey into that part of the interior,) a more than commonly rich country lies about thirty miles from the Gap, extending towards the north-west; and as the waters of the country were all running in that direction, he had strong reasons for concluding that they joined the Macquarie in its course across the continent to the north-west shores, as before surmised.

The district of Morton Bay contains some timber of a very different description from that which is found in other places to the south of it, producing at the same time all the varieties which are common in the more southern districts, where the cedar, as being the only deciduous tree of any magnitude yet found in the colony, is also the only species of soft wood available for building purposes: but at Morton Bay there are several varieties of soft woods of the pine tribe, whose form and dark foliage add much to the interest of the scenery, in contrast with the paler hue of the eucalyptus species, which still form the bulk of the forest-trees, as in other quarters of the country, although in greater variety.

I had also at this place opportunities of seeing and communicating with several native tribes, whose colour, hair, features, manners, and habits, are similar to those I had seen in every other quarter of the colony; and although their language is entirely different, no one could

doubt for a moment that they are the same race of people. While our ship was lying at anchor, a tribe was attracted by it to the shore, where they one morning made their appearance unarmed, and invited us to meet them. Supposing that they had learned the use of tobacco from the pilot's men, I provided myself with a stock of it, and went on shore. They however refused it with apparent disgust; and the white men afterwards informed me that they showed an equal aversion to spirits, which was a very good proof that they had had but little intercourse with their European brethren. They however evinced a strong partiality for biscuit and bread, which they greedily coveted from me. When I had given them all I had, I offered them some walnuts, which they did not seem to understand, and I therefore cracked and presented several to them. They roughly snatched these from my hand as I held them out, and after smelling at the nuts all round, the natives returned them to me, making signs for me to try them first; as soon as I had done so, they were in immediate requisition, and all my stock was soon devoured; but before they were all quite gone, I wished to barter the remainder for a curious stone knife, which one of the blacks had in his opossum-belt in a sheath made of grass, but he was unwilling to agree to the exchange. At this moment one of the pilot's convict boatmen stepped forward, (to oblige me as he imagined,) and with boisterous language and menaces snatched the knife, which he brought to me. I instantly returned it to its rightful owner, and gave the white man a severe lecture for such an unmanly and outrageous proceeding against a tribe of harmless and defenceless beings, who in a moment of confidence had laid aside their spears to meet us in

friendship, even though one of our party was armed with a musket.

As soon as the knife was restored, it was passed from one to another till the one who stood at the greatest distance dashed it down behind him on the sand. I saw however the whole transaction, although it was not intended I should, and was highly amused at it. I had now no hopes of purchasing an article which appeared to be held in such high estimation, but in a few minutes the owner approached me, and made several attempts to induce me to give him a red coloured cotton handkerchief which I held in my hand, and in which I had taken the biscuits and walnuts ashore. I at length gave him to understand that he might have it for the knife, with which he instantly and cheerfully complied; and the handkerchief was immediately applied like a bandage round the head by way of ornament.

I met also and communicated with others of the natives up the river Brisbane, but did not see one at the settlement, although informed that the tribes in the immediate vicinity were in the habit of going there occasionally; and that they were a harmless and good-natured race of people. I saw one convict there who had just returned, after having thrown off his clothes and absented himself for six months in the woods with the natives, by whom he had been well treated, and admitted as a member of their tribe.

I obtained from them several articles of their manufacture, which are exceedingly curious and ingenious; such as buckets and large bags woven with a coarse kind of grass, somewhat similar to the manufacture of New Zealand cloaks and mats; and I also procured some of their

weapons of war, which scarcely differ from those used by the natives at Port Stephens, and the most southern points of the colony, although distant above six hundred miles from each other in a direct line, and probably not less than nine hundred or a thousand miles by any practicable route either for black or white men.

CHAPTER X.

CAPABILITIES AND LOCAL ADVANTAGES OF THE DISTRICTS EAST AND WEST OF THE MOUNTAIN BARRIER—THE WEST COLDER THAN THE EAST—THE CLIMATE OF THE LATTER GENIAL TO THE PRODUCTION OF MOST PLANTS—ITS ADVANTAGES TO SETTLERS—WHY PREFERABLE TO THE WESTERN DISTRICT—SURPRISING INCREASE OF CATTLE—CAUSE OF THE PROSPERITY OF THE FIRST SETTLERS—DIFFICULTIES TO BE ENCOUNTERED BY THOSE SETTLING WEST OF THE MOUNTAINS—PENAL SETTLEMENTS—MORTON BAY—PORT MACQUARIE—MANNING RIVER—GRANTS OF LAND—COMPANY'S GRANT—NEWCASTLE—HUNTER'S RIVER—GOULBURN RIVER—WILLIAMS' RIVER—PATTERSON'S RIVER—WALLIS'S PLAINS OR MORPETH—LOCATED AND IMPROVED LAND ALWAYS ON SALE—ADVANTAGES OVER A GRANT OF NEW LAND—LIVERPOOL PLAINS—COUNTRY ABOUT WILLIAMS' RIVER—PATRICK'S PLAINS—HAWKSBURY RIVER—COW PASTURES—FAILURE OF THE HARVEST—ARGYLESHIRE—CLIMATE OF AUSTRALIA ALWAYS SALUBRIOUS AND DELIGHTFUL—CLEARING LAND—TIME OF PLANTING DIFFERENT CROPS—MAIZE—WHEAT—CATERPILLARS—RECLAIMED LANDS—RAVAGES OF THE WEEVIL—IMPORTANT POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION—CLOVER—DOOB-GRASS—HAY—VEGETABLES—TOBACCO—COTTON—FRUITS.

HAVING described two districts of country east and west of the Blue Mountains, as regards their natural state and their relative positions generally, I will endeavour now to point out their respective capabilities and local conveniences, with the view of assisting such persons as may be desirous of emigrating to Australia.

The level country about Bathurst, on the west of the mountains, being nearly two thousand feet above the level of the sea, the climate is of course much colder there than on the eastern side or coast line, and the seasons are consequently more distinctly marked. Snow occasionally falls in the winter on the western side, but it soon disappears; nor are the mountains so high there, or in any quarter yet discovered in Australia, as to admit of snow being retained upon their summits for more than a few days.

At Bathurst the climate is too cold for the production either of the orange, the lemon, the cotton-plant, or indeed any of the tropical productions which are raised on the coast line, although almost every European plant and vegetable which has been planted, is found to flourish there. The advantages, therefore, of the districts on the coast, over those on the west of the mountains with regard to climate, are, that most of the European, as well as many tropical fruits and plants, flourish there equally well. Wheat and Indian corn, the cabbage and the yam, the fig and the common plum, the apple and the orange, &c. grow side by side on the coast in the highest perfection, while the climate is no less salubrious than at Bathurst.

The distance of the latter place from Sydney, over a difficult country, and the want of any navigable river, will not admit of the settler pursuing agriculture beyond raising a supply for his own family, and a reserve against the casualties of seasons. The same causes must ever operate against the extensive cultivation of grain in all situations similar to this, and the raising of supplies therefore for the population of Sydney, or for any other towns near the sea, must be confined to those parts of the country which lie on the exterior or coast side of the mountains; and as

there is only a very limited quantity of land on that side fit for cultivation, and the greater part of this is subject to accidents from floods, droughts, and caterpillars, and in the upper districts to blights also, it is reasonable to suppose that those settlers who have located all the best and least hazardous parts of the eastern coast line yet opened to the public, will, by perseverance and good management, render their lands valuable; and will, upon an average of years, find a fair remuneration for their labour, capital, and skill in agriculture, independent of the exportable articles which the climate and soil will enable them to produce.

The failure of the last two harvests in succession, from drought and blights, with a similar prospect for the third, and the consequent distress and ruin in which these misfortunes have involved many of the most respectable settlers who cultivate the forest or higher lands only, are well known to every one connected with the colony; while the few who have settled almost immediately upon the navigable rivers, and cultivated the richest forest and low lands (and especially the latter) upon their banks, have largely profited by the distress of their less fortunate neighbours. The mass of settlers, however, who have recently gone out, will find a difficulty in fixing upon such land as a prudent man would be warranted in expending capital upon, unless they can afford to purchase farms that have been already settled, or consent to go behind the mountains; and then it is a question for consideration whether they will be inclined to grapple with the disadvantages I have already pointed out on that side. If their object be merely to exist, and to leave their children to vegetate there after them, they may cer-

tainly, if industrious and frugal, be gratified in that object.

The only exportable or cash articles which a Bathurst or inland settler can exchange or sell, to procure the articles necessary for domestic uses which his soil will not produce, are wool, and a limited quantity of cheese for the Sydney market, unless he can manufacture the latter article of a quality sufficiently permanent for the Indian voyage. As to his beef and mutton, he must expect little from them. The quantity already produced, and that of the latter which will follow in natural course, from the production of fine wool for the British market, will, in a very short period, be out of all proportion to the wants of the population, even though the whole race of cattle were extinct; and when I state that the government was last year supplied with beef under contract for the whole year, at $1\frac{7}{8}d.$ per lb., as the colonial newspapers will prove; and that the shipping in the harbour were supplied in April 1829, with beef at $1d.$ per lb.; I need say nothing further to show the prospect which the settler ought justly to entertain as to returns from the sale of that part of his productions in the colony. Herds of cattle are already strolling at large in the unoccupied interior, where an unlimited range of pasturage lies open to them; and although the country, as a whole, as far as is known of it, is exceedingly broken and poor, still the freedom of the soil from underwood, the prevalence of grass in consequence, however inferior it may generally be, and the accessibility of forests to horses and cattle in every direction, leave no doubt in the mind of any reasonable person, that these animals will, in a shorter space of time than has ever been recorded in the history of any

country, overrun the whole continent of New Holland, and produce results similar to those which are experienced at this day on the continent of South America, at Madagascar, and the Cape of Good Hope.

The increase of cattle and horses within the last seven years in the settled districts of Australia has been enormous, and beyond all former products in any country; and what is there, I ask, to prevent its proceeding in an increased ratio, in situations where not one natural check is opposed to it in the unlocated districts of the interior, to which the settlers are daily sending back their increasing and unsaleable herds as a relief to their farms? Before emigrants venture to embark for Australia, let them reflect upon all this; and let them also remember, that in no instance were similar efforts ever made in any colony to rear sheep, which, if they succeed in the production of the raw material for the staple manufactories of Great Britain to any amount, will add also to the mass of human food beyond demand for it, to an extent which never had a parallel in any country on the face of the habitable globe.

The capital which many of the first settlers amassed by their sales of stock, is just that which may always be expected, under similar circumstances, in all new countries situated at so vast a distance from any other habitable place. The subsequent profits of the early settlers were in proportion to their difficulties and privations in the first instance; for having once provided for their immediate wants in such a distant country, they were soon able to produce a surplus, for which, as they had no competitors from other countries, they found a ready market at high remunerating prices from the government, whose wants

were always considerable, in consequence of the large succession of convicts which were annually sent from England.

After a certain period, the first settlers, by great care and attention, from small beginnings reared considerable quantities of cattle and other live stock; and as emigration increased, a steady and profitable market was created for all their surplus produce of every kind, till at length many of the early settlers, between the demands of the government and the emigrants, became men of great opulence. This great success, and the voluptuousness of the climate, have constantly been held out by them, and by many of those who have since followed, as inducements for others to join them; and notwithstanding the numbers that have done so, and the rapid increase of human beings on the soil of Australia, still the increase of animals has been out of all proportion greater, and has given a death-blow to the further gains from those sources of the older settlers. These formerly governed the market, and obtained their own prices; and some among them made use of every species of misrepresentation, to induce men of capital from England to join them, and of course to become purchasers of their stock. Emigrants of the present day have the advantage of purchasing stock in almost every quarter of the colony, of a much better quality, and at about one fourth the prices which were paid five years ago, without being obliged to have recourse to those who *once* governed the market. The latter cannot now, however, look forward to exclusive sales and the gulling of emigrants, nor calculate their riches by the number and extension of their flocks and herds much beyond the fleeces which the former carry on their backs.

Should an emigrant, after what I have said, not consider the obstacles behind the mountains in the interior, sufficient to deter him from settling there, he will find tracts of land at a considerable distance from Bathurst that will probably answer his ends; but he will not find them numerous, and will experience considerable trouble even then, in selecting such a grant as ought to satisfy him.

The town of Bathurst consists of but few houses, and these belong chiefly to the government, which has an agricultural establishment there. The settler must therefore send his own team to Sydney for such articles as he requires, and this journey cannot be conveniently performed in less than a fortnight from Bathurst, and, of course, longer in proportion to the distance from it in the interior.

At Morton Bay, which is the most northern settlement, there is but little land worth locating on the coast side of the mountains; but as the accessible part of them, called the Gap, has been recently discovered, the country on the west side affords a prospect for settlers at a distance of seventy miles from the river Brisbane. There does not, however, appear to be any probability that this country will soon be thrown open to the public; and so long as it is necessary to keep it as a place for the punishment of criminals convicted in the colony, it is not possible to admit other persons there. I have reason to believe that the colonial government always found it difficult to provide secure places of punishment on the coast of New Holland, within any reasonable distance of Sydney, in consequence of the paucity of rivers, and the obstructions which are almost uniformly found at their en-

trances; and if penal settlements for the most incorrigible class of criminals were established inland, however great the distance, the roads by which they were conveyed to the places of punishment would also be those by which they would very soon convey themselves back again. Under the present mode therefore of conducting things in Australia, there is little probability that Morton Bay will soon be abandoned by government as a place of punishment, and, consequently, the advantages which appear to lie behind the Blue Mountain barrier in that quarter, must be withheld from the public.

The next port south of Morton Bay is Port Macquarie, which has also been kept as a penal settlement; but since the establishing of that at Morton Bay, the colonial government has been gradually preparing to throw it open to the public. There is a sand bar at the entrance of the harbour there, which renders it dangerous, and sometimes impossible to enter when the wind blows from certain points, and the entrance is at all times difficult in rough weather. Only vessels of small tonnage can cross the bar at any time, while those of a larger class are obliged to lie outside; and when the wind blows fresh from a particular quarter, they are sometimes obliged to slip their cables and proceed to sea.

The country between the various streams commencing a few miles from the Port, is exceedingly broken and hilly, and except in the vicinity of the rivers, (of which there are several small ones that discharge themselves into the harbour and coast adjoining,) it is fit for little else, generally, than horses and cattle, only a small portion of it being susceptible of cultivation. The rivers above the influx of the tide are mere mountain torrents,

whose characters, in all respects, are similar to those before described. The soil on and near their banks is sometimes exceedingly fine, but the valleys through which they flow are narrow, and the good land consequently very limited. The country from the sources of these rivers, which are sometimes not more than twenty-five or thirty miles in a direct line from the Port, is a succession of poor and sometimes brushy hills and impracticable mountains, extending to the eastern base of the barrier ridge which has been before described, about sixty miles from the sea.

If the governor had complied with the numerous applications which I have reason to believe have been made in the colony for land prospectively in that district, I feel assured that a greater quantity would have been granted than could have been found of a quality worth occupying; and as that Port has probably been thrown open ere this, and the lands granted, no person emigrating from this country hereafter need entertain any hope of securing such a grant in that district as would be worth his acceptance.

South of Port Macquarie is a river called the Manning, so named by myself, in honour of the deputy governor of the Australian Agricultural Company. The entrance of this river was supposed to be impracticable even for boats, until, in the year 1827, I ascertained the contrary to be the case. The sand bar at its mouth prevents any but very small craft from going in, and in rough weather it cannot be approached even by them. There is, however, an indentation of the coast a little to the north of the river's mouth, called Crowdy bay, where vessels of almost any size can lie safely at anchor, excepting when the wind

blows from one point. In still weather they can unload into boats which can be taken over the bar, and proceed up the river, which is thus navigable for twenty or twenty-five miles only. This river forms the northern boundary of the Australian Company's grant, and on its northern bank there is a narrow slip of fine country, consisting of open forest hills of good quality and lightly timbered, and several good flats by the river's side.

The vale through which the river flows is narrow, and the poor elevated forest hills which bound it on the north side are only distant about three miles, leaving a very confined, undulating surface between them and the river, and which is the only part where a settler could find land fit to be located. Of the first class soils, both forest and low land, I should not conceive there can be more than thirty thousand acres; and of the second quality, over which it would be safe to depasture sheep, there may perhaps be from fifty to seventy thousand acres. The remainder of the country on the north between it and Port Macquarie is of little value, consisting chiefly of sandy and low swampy lands in the vicinity of the shore, and further in the interior generally of poor brushy and almost impassable hills of considerable elevation. The same is the case on the west from the heads of the river (about thirty miles in a direct line from the shore) to the barrier ridge of Blue Mountains, from which the waters descend through innumerable deep dells and chasms between the intermediate hills till they unite in one stream, which meets the tide about twenty miles from the sea.

Before I left the colony in September 1828, the applications for land on the north side of this river, very far exceeded the quantity that could be made available for

profitable locations; but it seems that, more recently, Mr. R. H. Davis, M.P. for Bristol, and a Director of the Australian Agricultural Company, has obtained an order from the home government for land which he endeavoured to obtain there to an extent that would (had he been in time) have deprived almost every other person of selecting their grants on that river, where fifteen out of his thirty thousand acres have been appropriated for him. When I was in the colony in 1828, this district was considered too near the penal settlement of Port Macquarie to admit of the country being generally settled, and therefore no official answers were given to applications for land at that place, excepting to two settlers, who for particular reasons were allowed to settle there, but who have recently quitted the colony, disappointed, in common with many others, in the expectations they had formed.

Application having been made to a near relative of mine in London for the character of this land, as well as to the propriety of purchasing land in this quarter at the price of ten shillings an acre, I take this opportunity of stating the fact, because it is right that persons wishing to emigrate should be informed that the sum thus spoken of per acre in *London*, is just double the amount at which it would sell in the colony, were the situation ever so eligible. Occupied and *improved* land in the best settled districts, near or even contiguous to navigation, would not fetch more than ten to twelve shillings per acre. Not long before I left the colony, an estate of two thousand acres of the very best quality, not far from the navigable part of the Hunter's River, with a considerable quantity of cleared land, a hut, barn, &c. was sold for 1200*l.* to a recently arrived emigrant; and for several years previous to

this, similar purchases had been made in the same quarter. It seems rather hard that those who have gone out and are seeking in vain for a home, should see themselves so excluded, if individuals can obtain orders for land at home, and can sell it in London to persons unacquainted with its real value, with the *privilege* of dispensing with the hard conditions to which all *settlers* are bound with reference to *their* occupation and sale of land.

These facts afford additional proofs of how little is known in this country as to the real state of things in New South Wales, and how necessary it is to inform the public of them, that they be saved from the disappointments to which they have been so long exposed.

There is no practicable route by land to this district on the river Manning from Sydney but through the north and north-west part of the Australian Company's grant; and although the Committee of that Company were well informed of this, they urged upon me the measure of endeavouring to prevent the public from passing that way. Such conduct on the part of public bodies serves always to make them unpopular, and generally unsuccessful in new undertakings; and the disgust and opposition which this and other parts of their proceedings excited in the minds of the Australian public against them, operated much to the prejudice of their interests. The disposition evinced in this instance in particular was monstrous, because they had always been under the greatest obligations to individuals for similar indulgences towards themselves, without which, in a newly settled country, their servants could not have passed quietly by land to any part of their own possessions. Had the public imitated their conduct, the Company's stock would often have been impounded, and

their servants starved for want of provisions while on their various journeys over the solitary wilds and mountains between Sydney and Port Stephens. How they will be disposed to treat their neighbour, Mr. R. H. Davis, in this respect, (in case he is not so fortunate as to dispose of his land in *London*,) and whether *his* flocks and herds will be intercepted, remain to be seen.

A grant of one million of acres at Port Stephens was made to the Australian Agricultural Company in the year 1824: this, if taken in a square, would contain nearly forty miles on each side. Any particular description of this part of the country, while it remains in the possession of that Company, beyond what I have already given in the Journal in the former part of this work, would be useless and uninteresting to the public. The chief difference, however, which exists between that portion of the coast line, and any I have mentioned is, that the navigable rivers are more numerous than in any other quarter of equal extent: and as nearly all of them have their sources in the centre of the grant, and run east to the coast, and south to the harbour at Port Stephens, that portion of the country where they rise is exceedingly broken and mountainous. This elevated tract, and also the numerous valleys through which these streams and their branches flow, partake of the general character of the country already described east of the Blue Mountains, the grant varying in quality as a whole in proportion to the number of rivers, in the vicinity of which considerable portions of land of good quality have been found.*

* The establishment of this Company was always exceedingly unpopular in the colony, except with those who for a time could make a market of it for the sale of their surplus stock, during which period they were interested

The country which lies between the harbour of Port Stephens and Newcastle is merely a continuation of sandbanks and swamps. The eastern face of the hills which skirt the shore contain some herbage, upon which a few cattle might be grazed ; but there is nothing in that whole extent of country which could be located with any prospect of advantage.

Newcastle is the next port south of Port Stephens. Here is a small township, which as yet resembles a large village rather than a town, with a small barrack, some storehouses, a church, and a windmill. The river Hunter discharges itself into the harbour at this place. There is a sand bar at its entrance, which renders the navigation difficult in rough weather. Vessels, however, of two and three hundred tons have occasionally called there for coals, which are easily obtained. A packet sails between this place and Sydney (a distance of about eighty miles) every week, and is comfortably fitted up for passengers. The district of the Hunter's River is by far the richest and the most important in the colony : it may truly be said to be the garden as well as the granary of New South Wales. The river takes its rise at the foot of the Blue Mountains, in the vicinity of which there are several branches or mountain streams, of which the Goulburn, which rises in a south-west direction, is the most considerable. About twelve miles from the harbour it receives from the north the waters of the William's River, or the first branch, as it is called. This river is navigable above

in keeping it alive ; but when the Company ceased thus to afford them a market, it became their interest, as well as that of every other settler, to strike down the leviathan before it should be converted from a customer into an all powerful competitor.

its junction with the Hunter for about twelve miles, following its winding course; the tide flows the whole of this distance, and there is sufficient depth of water to admit vessels of about two hundred tons as far as the tide flows. A few miles only beyond this, on the same side, the Patterson's River, or what is called the second branch, forms a junction with the river Hunter. This branch is also navigable for about twelve miles up, as far as the tide flows.

From Newcastle to near the junction of the William with the Hunter's River, the banks on both sides consist, with few exceptions, of low sandy and swampy grounds, while the few patches of grassy land that are found on its banks, however poor, are all occupied. Above the point where the William's River joins it, the banks on both sides gradually improve in quality to a place called Wallis Plains, where navigation ceases, and where there is a township, which at present consists only of some straggling cottages, a store or two, several small public-houses, with a substantial and commodious inn in progress for the accommodation of the more respectable settlers.

Wallis Plains, or Morpeth, as it has recently been called, is situated about twenty miles from the town of Newcastle by land. The country along the line of road (which has recently been improved by the colonial government) is of little value, being chiefly low and swampy, with occasional undulating ground and hills, whose surface consists for the most part of sour clay, thinly clothed with herbage of inferior quality. At Wallis Plains there is a tract, although of no great extent, of very rich low land adjoining the river; especially that belonging to Mr. Macintyre, which is the most valuable estate of its size in

the colony. The greater part of this land has long been cleared and located; and, contrary to the usual progress of things in new countries, it has already arrived at that period when rent is obtained for land of the first class for the production of grain, although that part of the country has not been thrown open to the public more than seven or eight years. This is one effect of the very peculiar circumstances attending New South Wales with reference to the barrier ridge of mountains limiting its available production of grain in the interior. The want of internal navigation, the general poverty of the soil, especially near the coast, and the casualties arising from seasons and other causes, in the upper districts on the coast line at a considerable distance from navigation, tend of course to render such land as that at Wallis Plains of great value and importance.

From Wallis Plains to the most remote locations on the Hunter's River and its fresh water branches, the distance is about eighty miles by the route which travellers are obliged to pursue. The country connected with this river from Wallis Plains to its sources, contains an incalculably greater proportion of lightly-timbered and rich soil than has yet been observed in an equal space continuously in any quarter of the colony. The valley through which the principal stream of the Hunter's River passes is however narrow, and bounded by lofty hills of an inferior description. The valleys, which are adorned by its numerous branches, are similar to it; but as the sources of these streams are at a greater distance from the coast than any others to the north of Newcastle, the extent of good country is of course in proportion to it.

The general character of the country along the course

of these streams, or rather torrents, (for in the summer they are nearly dry, and in the rainy seasons overflowing,) is similar to what I have described, excepting that the low undulating hills, consisting of the decomposed argillaceous rock before described, occur more frequently, and, as well as the alluvial flats, are more extensive. Nothing can exceed the varied beauty of some parts of the scenery in these delightful vallies, the richness of whose soil produces an almost perpetual verdure on the low hills, and the still lower grounds which are connected with them.

There is no eligible part of this fine country unoccupied; and those emigrants therefore who may be desirous of settling here, must either purchase of those who preceded them, or take land as a grant, upon which it would by no means be advisable to settle. In all new countries property is subject to great fluctuations, and as New South Wales has not been exempt from the causes which produce such variations, there is always in the market plenty of the best located and partially improved land, with which emigrants of capital and skill may be accommodated, yielding far better prospects than could be gained by taking grants of inferior and unprofitable soils. Grants of the very best description, eight and ten miles from navigation at Wallis Plains, sold in 1826, 1827, and 1828, for ten and twelve shillings per acre, with several buildings and enclosures upon them, including a considerable portion of cleared land: and at this moment I have reason to believe, that in consequence of scarcity and extreme distress, locations equally valuable may be purchased for less money. A quit rent of five per cent per annum upon a valuation of a dollar per acre, redeemable at twenty years' purchase, is paid to government, after the first three years, for all

grants however inferior or distant; but those who are possessed of the requisite capital will not hesitate a moment as to purchasing a good estate on the Hunter's River, in the midst of respectable society, rather than to occupy, as a grant, the higher and poorer tracts upon any terms. If I am correct in my ideas of the soil generally, and also of the climate and other peculiar circumstances attending this country, capital could not be more profitably invested upon land in any quarter of the world than in its purchase, of a quality fit for agricultural purposes, near Hunter's River and its branches.

In proportion as the whale-fisheries extend, and exportable productions are cultivated, that capital which is now so much wanted will find its way to Australia, and consequently the very limited quantity of productive and more certain soils near to navigation, will rise in value beyond what is usual in other countries.

The communications between Newcastle and the most distant parts of the Hunter's River, are not interrupted by any insuperable obstacles, except in times of floods, when the intercourse is generally stopped both by land and water, for certain periods.

The courses of the rivers, as may be supposed, when running through a broken country, are extremely tortuous. I cannot better describe this, than by stating that the flocks of sheep which I sent from Bathurst to Port Stephens, in 1827, were obliged to cross that branch of Hunter's River called the Goulburn, no less than fourteen times in the distance only of about thirty miles.

Above the sources of Hunter's River, on the north-west, lies a district of country called Liverpool Plains. No part of Australia has been more misrepresented than this portion.

It has been described as a country eminently calculated for the plough and the production of grain, as well as for sheep-husbandry and cattle, although in reality it is fit only for the latter and horses. The best parts of it are under water during the rainy seasons, and those portions which are more elevated and broken, and above the influence of the floods, are as poor and unproductive as any land of a similar cast in the colony. The detection also, in every quarter, of various species of aquatic plants, upon the surface of parts not so broken, and which *appear* to be beyond the reach of the floods, prove that they are not so, or that they are spongy and subject to springs and therefore unfit for sheep. There have been several herds of cattle depastured on these plains since the year 1826, by different settlers. Here also various cattle-stealers resorted, who secreted their stolen herds in the most secluded parts, and who were therefore better acquainted with the nature of these plains than any one else. These marauders, with whom I had an opportunity of conversing, agreed in opinion with individuals who had gone hastily over the district, that it is adapted for cattle and horses only, and that scarcely any part can be used for other purposes. The plains are said to be about forty miles in extent each way, and their waters, which run in a north-west direction, are supposed to fall into the Macquarie. The barrier ridge between them and the sources of the River Hunter is accessible to stock, while these plains can also be approached with equal facility from Bathurst. The settlers in the upper districts of the river Hunter will find them a great relief, during dry seasons, for their herds of cattle; and in summer, when the weather is settled, and promises to continue dry, certain parts may perhaps be used as auxiliary stations for

yearling ewes and wethers, under careful and experienced shepherds. If any other views than these are entertained regarding them, let those who are desirous of establishing themselves there reflect well before they make the attempt.

There is only a very small portion of good land on the William's River, as far as the salt water flows, and less from the point towards its sources than on most other streams of the same description. The country east and north-east of this river, above where it is navigable, adjoins the grant of the Australian Agricultural Company, and is of a very broken and mountainous description. Further to the west and north-west it is of a better character, although much broken near the river; but there is on the whole very little of good country, and that little is all located.

The vale through which the Patterson's River flows, is nearly parallel with and only a few miles from that of William's River. A tract of good land commences on its banks near its junction with the Hunter's River, called Patrick's Plains, where there is a store and an inn for the accommodation of the settlers. The quantity of good land on the banks of this river is very inconsiderable in every part of it, and except in the narrow vallies through which the waters run, the country is broken and elevated, and in some places mountainous.

These two rivers rise about thirty miles to the east of the Blue Mountain range, between which and their sources, the country consists of a succession of very high hills and impracticable mountains, running north from the Hunter's River to the parallel of Port Macquarie, and far beyond it. Every part of the country, of any value, to which

the public have had access, is located: but as there is not one acre in five hundred worth occupying, at any considerable distance from the principal valleys, excepting as rough appendages to the lower lands, the settlers are very few in comparison with the extent of country around them.

In the former part of my narrative, I described the mountainous tract of country over which I passed from Sydney to the Hunter's River, and shall therefore merely observe here, that the line of road to Sydney is now made practicable for carriages by the colonial government. The country west of this road—that is, between it and the Blue Mountains—is elevated and broken, and, with few exceptions, of little or no value, as far as Windsor and the River Hawksbury.

The next port, or river, south of Newcastle, is Broken Bay, at the mouth of the river Hawksbury, which has long been settled. There are no natural obstructions to the entrance of this river; but the banks on both sides are rocky and barren, with the exception of trees, which are to be found, with very few exceptions, on the most barren and rocky hills and mountains. After arriving at a place called Wiseman's Ford, (where there is a comfortable inn kept by a kind-hearted, honest soul of that name,) the flats by the river's side become sufficiently extensive and rich for cultivation. This place is about twenty miles from the mouth of the river, and although there is a good deal of rich low land in small patches on its banks from this place to Windsor, still very little of the higher parts of the country is of any value except for rough cattle runs.

The valley, or rather deep glen, through which the waters of the Hawksbury run, differs here in its character

in almost every respect, from other parts of the country to the north. The river appears to have cut its way through an elevated mountain tract. It receives the waters of an extensive district of country from the south and south-west beyond Windsor, and runs parallel with the Blue Mountain range, at a short distance from it, above the town of Windsor. In the early days of the colony, and up to the very recent period when the rich country on the banks of the Hunter's River and its branches became settled, an immense degree of importance was attached to these remote and comparatively small tracts of low land which accompany the river Hawksbury, although their produce was frequently destroyed by the sudden inundations to which they are so much exposed along this narrow and deep valley. This shows what indeed every person of the commonest observation in New South Wales must have remarked, that the soil, except in a few favoured spots, is in general exceedingly poor and unfit for agriculture, and especially in the districts south of the Hawksbury, for without the assistance of the land on that river, the country was, for nearly thirty years, unable to support a population quite insignificant, when compared with the immense tracts of unavailable country, which lying nearer and more convenient to Sydney, would, of course, have preceded in cultivation those on the Hawksbury, had they presented any prospective advantages to their occupiers: and even with the assistance of that district, and that of the Hunter's River, the population, not exceeding, at any period, sixty thousand, has been several times upon the verge of famine, which calamity has threatened them so recently even as the years 1828-9.

From Broken Bay to Sydney the country is a continuation of rocky and unproductive hills and mountains, not only near the shore, but with the exception of the Hawkesbury Valley and a few other isolated spots, it continues so in a westerly direction to the Blue Mountains.

A few miles only to the south of Sydney is Botany Bay, where the first settlement was intended to have been formed. Here the shores, and also the country for a considerable extent back, are low, and sandy, and quite unfit for the purposes either of grazing or cultivation, although nearly the whole tract abounds with evergreen and flowering shrubs of the most beautiful description, similar to those which are found on every part of the coast where low sandy ground prevails.

The country in the neighbourhood of Sydney, and for forty miles beyond, in a south and a south-west direction, is much less mountainous and broken than in any other quarter between the sea and the barrier range of Blue Mountains. It is, in fact, that fine waving or undulating country so much talked of in England, and which has for so many years been used as a seductive bait for the attentive listeners to Australian wonders; and, as far as the pleasing inequalities of the surface go, in situations where they can be observed, either through or over the thickly-wooded forests, it has not been described beyond its merits; but there is a lamentable want of fertile soil, which those who have long been sounding its praises in England have generally omitted to mention, and which circumstance has occasioned some disappointment to those who have left their homes under different impressions of this apparently beautiful tract of country.

The prevailing quality of the land in this district, for

thirty miles, is a sour clay, with very little vegetable soil upon it: it is also very thickly timbered, with tall trees of the same species as are found in the country to the north; but it is every where free from underwood. In the rainy seasons the flat parts are either partially flooded or sodden with wet from the retentive nature of the soil; while in dry seasons the herbage is parched, and the want of water so great, that cattle cannot remain there, and they are usually driven over the Blue Mountains on the west, or to the high and mountainous district called Argyleshire on the south. This description applies more particularly to that portion of the country from Sydney to Paramatta, and to Liverpool, the former being sixteen, and the latter twenty miles from Sydney. About twelve miles southwest of Liverpool, is the country called the Cow Pastures, where there is some land of a much better description; but even this is in very limited quantity, and by no means to be compared in richness to the soils on the Hunter's River. In the centre of a poor country, and before the richer districts lying to the north were discovered, an importance was naturally attached to this part, in proportion to the then situation of the colony, but which fictitious value has long since ceased to exist. If the present population were now in a state of dependence upon lands of similar quality, and as uncertain in their productions, starvation would inevitably be its fate.

The best soil in the Cow Pasture flats is a brown sandy loam upon a sub-stratum of clay. In some few places the loam lies in beds of considerable thickness; but generally it is only a few inches above the clay, in which case it is much better calculated for grazing than for grain. It is also a fact, that much less rain falls in this

than in any other quarter of the colony during summer: this may be ascribed to its low and undulating surface, for while the more broken and elevated countries on the north are replenished by fruitful showers of rain, the district of the Cow Pastures is sometimes left without sufficient moisture to cause the vegetation of the grain in the soil; or if there be enough for its first vegetation, the drought too often arrests its progress to maturity. There was a lamentable evidence of this in the year 1828.

In 1827 very little wheat or maize was produced there, and in 1828 none at all, even on the deepest soils. During this year the cattle and sheep having neither grass nor water, were driven from every quarter of the Cow Pasture district to the mountains; while the country about Hunter's River and its various branches, and that to the north, maintained their flocks and herds in their usual condition, and promised to produce also a plentiful crop of wheat, until the plant arrived to a certain stage in the ear, when the blights in the upper districts of this beautiful country destroyed it as they did the preceding year. Wheat and maize, in consequence of this second failure in succession, rose from 5*s.* to 15*s.* and even 20*s.* per bushel in 1828. Butter sold at 3*s.* 6*d.* and 3*s.* 9*d.* per lb. in the Sydney market, while the best beef and mutton were only 3*d.* and 3½*d.* per lb. and the government was supplied with the former from the mountains, where there were both water and grass, at 1*d.* and ⅔*d.* per lb.

The greater part of the settlers, who had hoped to be sellers, were obliged to become purchasers of grain, both for subsistence and for seed for the ensuing year of 1829; and it has since been ascertained, that the sum-

mer and harvest of 1829 were little better than the preceding.

The enormous increase of beef and mutton in every quarter, and the distress of the breeders, forced this part of their produce into the market, where they were sold (when sales could be effected) for less than one fourth of the prices obtained in 1825-6, while very many of the proprietors and settlers were brought to irretrievable ruin.

Some idea may be formed of the influence of a broken and elevated surface upon the weather in Australia, when I state, that the rivers in the lower districts, although they rise at so short a distance in the hills, sometimes suddenly overflow their banks from heavy falls of rain near their sources, without any appearance of a change below, or even a cloud in the horizon to denote it in the hills. The higher and more uneven parts of the country at a distance from the coast, and those immediately upon it, are the most favoured as to rain; and as far as my experience goes, (and it has been confirmed by those who have longer known these districts,) more frequent showers occur during summer, near the Hunter's River than at Sydney, and more at Port Macquarie than at Hunter's River: and if the luxuriant crops of wheat which I saw on the low brush lands at Morton Bay, in Sept. 1828, be any criterion, there is good reason for concluding that the climate is more humid there also than it is in the vicinity of Sydney and the Cow Pastures, which were absolutely barren wastes during that season. In the latter district there are some confined tracts of good sheep-hills; but, as I have before observed, in dry summers there is a dearth of water, which obliges the settler to

drive his cattle, and sometimes his sheep to the mountains; and during the rainy seasons the low flat lands are unsafe, producing the poke and rot in sheep, when kept too long upon them, as I have myself witnessed on several farms, and particularly on one called Retreat in the Brin-gelly district, and on others in the Camden district; a fact which, till recently, has been studiously concealed, and from which many a newly-arrived emigrant has ultimately suffered.

To the south of the Cow Pasture lies an extensive tract of mountainous country called Argyleshire. The climate is much cooler here than in any other quarter on the coast line, but it is one of the poorest tracts of country in the colony. There is but little level or waving land in it, the hills being high, and the valleys narrow and deep. There are some flocks of sheep kept on the best parts, but they are not numerous, nor can they ever be so, from the want of sufficient open and sound tracts to depasture them upon. The country, as may be supposed from its elevation and broken surface, is well watered, and in the shady glens and dells between the hills, there is some good grazing for cattle. Every spot, however, that is worth notice, has long been occupied, the most distant parts being above one hundred and fifty miles from Sydney.

In describing the different quarters of the colony, or at least such as are worthy of notice, it has not been my intention to enter into very minute details, my object having been to describe generally each district in succes-

sion, so as to enable the reader to compare them with each other, and to have a general view of the whole.

Those persons who are desirous of emigrating to New South Wales, and into whose hands this work may fall, will probably be anxious to know in which quarter on the east, or coast side of the barrier mountains, good land, or such as it would be prudent to select, is to be found. To this I answer, that I can give them no satisfactory information upon that point, because I am not aware, and indeed I do not believe, that any good soil remains unlocated; and unless, therefore, they can command sufficient capital to enable them to purchase good land on the Hunter's River, or are prepared to go behind the mountains, and to encounter the difficulties I have before pointed out, they had better stay at home.

Nothing can be more salubrious, or more delightful, than the climate of New South Wales in every quarter which I have visited. The richness of some parts of the soil in the numerous valleys, and the beauty of the scenery in those places, can hardly, in my imagination, be exceeded in any part of the world. If, therefore, a man, possessed of means sufficient (when added to the productions of the soil) for supplying the wants of his family, were to settle himself in one of the rich vales not far removed from the navigable course of the Hunter's River, I know of no country in the world more calculated, as regards climate and situation, for human enjoyment.

When I left the colony in September 1828, there were numerous applications for land, both from the newly-arrived emigrants, and those already settled in the country; and although many had received their orders for land, and some for a very considerable period, yet very

few had been able to select any in the coast districts, and in consequence had made no use of their orders. During the last three months of my residence in the colony, my time was chiefly employed in traversing various parts of the country north of Sydney, having been intrusted with commissions from numerous friends and acquaintances, to select for them above forty thousand acres. Notwithstanding my search, and the most diligent enquiries amongst persons the most likely to be acquainted with such places as I could not visit, it was not possible to select any which could be recommended as likely to prove serviceable to the parties, without going to a great distance behind the Blue Mountains.

It is little likely that I shall ever revisit the shores of Australia, although I retain a very strong partiality for the country as a place of residence, and have left behind me many kind friends, whose interests it would gratify me to advance by every means in my power. My object, in these pages, has been to show the face and qualities of the country generally, for the better information of those who have not seen it; to give such hints to individuals proceeding there as will put them upon their guard against the misrepresentations of interested and designing persons; and to save those who may be wavering between two opinions from the pains of disappointment, and the probable ruin that might, under certain circumstances, attend their removal to that country.

Previous to my visiting Australia, I had often, amongst other wonderful things, heard it stated in London, by the

near relative of an old established settler at Camden, that the country was so thinly timbered, as to require little expence and trouble to clear it for the purposes of agriculture. I found, however, the fact to be the reverse of this statement; and although certain classes of rich soils are not heavily timbered, yet the first class, which is the deep vegetable soil called *brush*, on the banks of the rivers, is, of any land with which I am acquainted either in England or abroad, the most expensive and troublesome to clear.

The timber is exceedingly large, tall, and thick, and the ground is encumbered with creeping vines, and a species of brushwood peculiar to those soils. The hardness of the wood too every where, does not admit of a man's chopping down a tree in so short a space of time as in England, where also an expert woodman would grub trees of the same size in much less time than in New South Wales. The grubbing, however, or complete clearing of the land, does not take place in the first instance. The settler commences by chopping down the trees, which are afterwards cut into logs of such a length as will enable him to roll and pack them together for the purpose of their being burnt; and as soon as the operation of burning has been completed, the land is ploughed up between the stumps, which are generally left from eighteen inches to two feet above the ground. The mere chopping down of the trees occasions little trouble and expence when compared with the labour of cutting them up, and that which follows until they are consumed by the fire. The difficulty and labour required in packing the logs in piles of sufficient thickness and height, to cause them to burn out, is very considerable; and unless they

are placed in large masses, and in a particular form, it is not possible to keep them burning, especially in their green state. Inexperienced people often imagine that little else is required to clear land than to cut down the trees, which can easily be burnt out of the way; but this is only the commencement of the Herculean labours which must be undergone, before the plough can be set to work in the roughest manner amongst the stumps that remain. Many years generally pass away before these are eradicated; for the settler, finding that he can produce a subsistence from the soil without this additional toil and expence, and being surrounded by cares and wants of other descriptions, sacrifices little or nothing to appearances, and therefore leaves the stumps till he can afford to remove them. When they have stood for several years they become hard and dry, in which state, if removed at all, they are generally burnt out, but great labour even then is required in undermining them, in order to apply the fire for their eradication with proper effect. None of the trees have tap-roots like the English oaks: they generally floor much lower under the surface than the oak, and their lateral or horizontal roots are larger and more numerous.

The first crop which a settler takes from his *newly* cleared land is maize, which is planted from September to December, generally after one ploughing; and sometimes the poorer kind of settlers do not plough it at all, merely making holes with the hoe, and planting the seed. A crop of wheat succeeds the maize, and alternates with it as long as the land will bear it; and where the settler can afford to go on clearing, the first patch, as soon as it becomes exhausted, is abandoned for the more newly

cleared lands, while the former is left to nature and time to restore its fecundity. But although this is the practice amongst a certain class of settlers, there are others who adopt the system of fallowing and manuring, in preference to the clearing and breaking up of fresh lands. It is impossible to lay down any general rules for either practice, because it must, after all, depend upon the quality, situation, and extent of the soils.

Maize is planted in September and October, for an early crop; and in November and December, it follows on good soils the wheat crops, which is harvested in the latter months, and then the maize crop is called stubble maize.

Wheat is planted in March and April, which are the autumnal months. Reaping usually commences in November, and the stubble maize which succeeds coming off within the year, has given New South Wales the reputation of producing two crops, or two harvests in the year on the same ground. There are always, however, two harvests, or rather two periods for the harvesting of wheat and maize; because the latter, not being able to stand the winter, however mild, is planted in the spring, which melting as it were almost immediately into summer, causes such a rapid maturing of the wheat crop, as to prevent the maize from coming into harvest like the spring grain in England along with the wheat crop. But the production of maize after wheat on the same ground, and during the same year, is an exception to the general rule, and can only take place to advantage in very favourable seasons, and on the very best soils, as maize is well known to be a scourging crop in New South Wales, and can only be cultivated successfully on the best land.

Oats do not succeed well, one part of the grain being ripe and shelling, while the other part is perfectly green on the same stalk. Inconveniences of this kind occur sometimes in England; but in Australia they are so great as to prevent this grain from being cultivated with any success. The produce of barley is a thin light grain, and as it yields but little in quantity, its cultivation is very rare. Beans are nowhere attempted to be cultivated in Australia. I tried them repeatedly in my garden, where they produced an abundance both of straw and blossoms, but no pods. This was in accordance with trials that had previously been made by others. Peas succeed better, but are seldom cultivated for a crop. The quantity of pulse which they yield is small, although of good quality. The dwarf species is most prolific in the gardens; but even these do not yield so plentifully as in England, although the straw and blossoms of each kind are abundant. Their partial failure, however, is of little consequence in New South Wales, while maize can be produced. This crop is found to supply the place of other spring grain for nearly every purpose for which it could be adopted. Horses, pigs, and poultry, thrive as well upon maize as upon any other grain; and when it is ground and mixed with wheaten flour in the proportion of one fifth, the bread is superior to that made from wheat alone. The bakers and millers in England are well aware that the same is the case with regard to the meal from beans, with which the best flour is frequently mixed. The assertion that maize alone can make good and palatable bread, will be readily contradicted by all those who have ever tasted it so prepared. Many of the small Irish settlers in New South Wales do eat it, however, but this is

only because they will be "after taking their cratur (whiskey) too often," which compels them to dispose of their wheat, and live afterwards upon their maize, or any thing else that will afford them a subsistence before their next harvest arrives. The hard, red portion, or skin of the grain, in which the flour is enclosed, is necessarily ground and mixed with the flour, and as there are no means of separating it afterwards, the meal is rendered harsh and coarse, and unfit to make good bread. It will support life, it is true, and so would bread made from peas or beans, which are just as applicable in that state for human food as maize.

The species of maize which Mr. Cobbett has introduced into this country would, I have no doubt, prove a great acquisition in New South Wales, as being an early kind, and well adapted to follow the wheat crop on that account. I obtained in Paris, in 1825, at the recommendation of the late Baron de Stael, some seed of the same species, with several other valuable seeds which I took the same year to New South Wales. On my landing in that country I placed these seeds in the hands of a person connected with the Australian Agricultural Company, under a promise of receiving a portion of their produce; but although I afterwards saw some of the plants growing in the gardens belonging to this party, I never could succeed in procuring one seed or plant, in return for my misplaced confidence; nor could I even obtain any account of their produce! This I hope will be a warning to others who carry out rare seeds, and will thus enable them to profit by my experience. Emigrants who cannot find time and opportunity to try experiments with any seeds or plants which they may take out, had better put them

into the hands of Mr. Frazer, of the government botanical gardens at Sydney, where the greatest liberality is shown, and desire evinced, to cultivate and disseminate every thing that can be useful to the colony.

As I may be supposed to know something as to the growth of maize and its uses, I will take this opportunity of observing, that although it is a succedaneum in New South Wales for other species of grain, which I have enumerated as not applicable to that climate, yet in England, where these can all be successfully cultivated, I do not think any advantages would arise from the cultivation of maize, even though it could be made to yield the quantities contemplated by Mr. Cobbett. Without going into any detailed arguments upon the subject, I shall content myself by stating the four following reasons, on which I found my opinion.

1st. It is an exhausting crop, and to insure success in any climate the soil must be good.

2nd. An acre of maize would supplant an acre of some other description of spring grain, and it would not upon an average of years produce in England a greater weight of meal than the various kinds of spring grain now in use.

3rd. It would be an expensive crop to the English farmer, inasmuch as it would require a much greater quantity of hand labour to cultivate it successfully than any other species of grain.

4th. The straw from maize would be of no greater advantage to the farmer to turn into manure for the renovation of the soil than so many faggot-sticks, and could only be got rid of properly by burning it on the spot.

In consequence of the dryness of the climate in New

South Wales, it is not an easy thing to produce manure from straw; and the circumstance, therefore, of maize yielding none of any value, is of less consequence there than it would be to the English farmer, with whom it is an article of indispensable necessity. Straw-yards are nowhere to be seen in Australia, and the cattle, which in other countries tread the straw into manure, are grazing all the year round in the forests. So long, therefore, as settlers can find fresh land of good quality on their grants, or while that which is already cleared remains unexhausted, they think little about manure, and frequently set fire to the straw when beyond the distance at which it can be disposed of at Sydney.

The quality and weight of wheat in New South Wales are generally superior to any which is produced in Europe. The skin or bran is exceedingly thin, and the grains are smaller than that which we produce in England. It is not uncommon for a bushel of wheat in New South Wales to weigh sixty-five or sixty-six pounds. I have no recollection of ever having seen any in England that exceeded sixty-three pounds the bushel, and this weight is considered rather extraordinary. But while the quality of the wheat thus exceeds that which is grown in the Old World, the same favourable comparison cannot be made with reference to quantity. I never heard of such a produce in New South Wales as forty bushels of wheat per acre, which is sometimes, although seldom, the case in England: nor do the best soils in general yield as much there as they do in England. Twenty-four bushels of wheat, and forty to fifty bushels of maize per acre, I believe, are considered good crops in New South Wales; and although they may both be exceeded occasionally, still the produce

from an acre of the best ground is more frequently below than above these quantities.

The young wheat, as well as whole districts of young grass, are sometimes destroyed by swarms of caterpillars, of which it is difficult to get rid. When a field is attacked, as it generally is from one particular quarter, the progress of these destructive insects has sometimes been arrested, and the crop saved, by ploughing a single furrow across their course. The injury occasioned by them to the grass is not confined to the existing crop; several succeeding ones are affected by it also, and a considerable period elapses before the soil recovers its former fertility. Fortunately, these visitations are not very frequent; they are, however, more common about the southern districts than on the Hunter's River. One instance of it only occurred while I was at Port Stephens, upon a considerable quantity of young grass there in March 1826, and the effects of it were visible for two years afterwards.

Mildew is little known in New South Wales: the plants on the best soils are kept down by the droughts from that degree of plethora which occasions a rupture of the sap vessels in a more humid climate, and which in England I believe to be the cause of what is termed mildew, in contradistinction to blights, which in the higher districts in New South Wales appear to be caused by the frosts, when the wheat is in blossom.

As soon as the warm weather sets in, about September, the young plants are forced on to maturity with extraordinary quickness. They are, of course, tender in proportion, and are, like our wall fruit, unfavourably operated upon by the sudden alternations from heat to cold, which take place at a distance from the coast, and under the in-

fluence of the adjoining mountains, where, as late as the latter end of September, frosts frequently prevail at night, after the thermometer has been standing at 80 and 90 degrees during the day. The mischief and distress which have ensued in consequence of the repeated destruction of the wheat crop from the above cause, are beyond calculation, and especially during the seasons of 1827, 1828, and 1829. They serve to show, in the strongest manner, how very much the space is limited in which a crop of grain can be calculated upon between the mountains and the sea from the cause of blight alone, independent of the failures which arise from the effect of droughts. The districts where such calamitous disappointments have so often occurred will, I doubt not, more or less, be ultimately abandoned as unfit for agricultural purposes, and the lower lands nearer to the tide will be drained and cultivated in their stead. If one-fourth of the capital which has been thrown away on the forest grounds nearer to the mountains, had been expended in embanking and draining some of these lands, the colony would not have suffered as it has done. There are few settlers, however, who had been accustomed to agriculture before they emigrated to New South Wales; and as they have consequently no idea of the effects of draining and embanking in low countries, they will not easily be convinced until time and circumstances force the conviction upon them. The examples, however, of Mr. Broughton and Mr. Webber on Patterson's River, and of Mr. Graham on the Hunter's River, and even the very rough attempts both of Mr. Sparkes and Mr. Harris on the latter, upon lands which the tide has left, ought to convince every person who sees or enquires into the result of their trials, how important it is to set

about the reclaiming of lands which are covered to a great depth with vegetable deposits, and which lie in situations where neither blights nor droughts are likely to affect their produce. My opinion upon this subject was openly and frequently expressed long before I saw or heard of any use being made of such land in Australia; but where ignorance and bigotry usurp the place of reason and experience, it is of little use to offer suggestions. I doubt not, however, that I shall, if I live, hear that my opinions have been confirmed, and that the sufferings produced by the last three years will have more weight than my arguments in the establishing of better ideas upon the subject of agriculture in New South Wales.

Seasons of plenty have sometimes occurred in Australia, such as the harvest of 1825, caused by a wet season: this is the only productive one with which I am acquainted since I have known the colony. Wheat was then sold at one period of the year as low as 2s. 6d. per bushel, and maize at the same price. The cultivators complained that these prices did not remunerate them; and if, therefore, it had been possible to have preserved the surplus quantity of wheat of that year from being destroyed by the weevil, no doubt a great proportion would have been held by merchants and speculators till times of scarcity, and consequently of higher prices in succeeding years, in the room of its being wasted, as I know it was, to a great extent, by giving it in common with maize as food for pigs and poultry.

In the warm climate of New South Wales the ravages of the insect called the weevil on grain resemble their destructive effects in some of the southern parts of Europe, and render it almost impossible long to protect the corn

from these myriads of devourers, either in the granaries or ricks, especially in the former. I speak from facts which came extensively under my own knowledge, as well as from information obtained elsewhere, having experienced much trouble and anxiety to preserve the wheat, which I was compelled to purchase from time to time for the use of the Company. I generally employed one or two men in stirring and skreening it daily, without which it would have been entirely consumed by the weevil, which pierces it, and when left to itself devours every particle of the flour, leaving the grain a perfect shell. The great points, therefore, to be aimed at by those interested in the success of this colony are, 1st. To extend the cultivation of land in situations where the produce would not be liable in an equal degree to the accidents that have hitherto caused such disappointments and distress; and 2nd. To devise the means of preserving, after seasons of plenty, the surplus grain in store for future exigencies. To these two objects I had given much consideration while in the colony, and felt very confident that I should soon have been able to prove the practicability of both. I hope that the settlers in that distant land will yet experience the benefits which I have contemplated. Hitherto they have actually been living from hand to mouth, as it were; and would have suffered much more severely than they have done, but for the assistance which they have always received during seasons of distress, through importations of wheat from the neighbouring settlement of Van Dieman's Land. The supplies of rice also, as well as a species of grain called *gramme* from India, which has been substituted for the use of maize, have prevented the price of the latter article, as well as wheat,

from rising so high as it otherwise would have done during the last two years.*

The places from which New South Wales has received its supplies of wheat in times of need, are Van Dieman's Land, Valparaiso, the Cape of Good Hope, and Calcutta. To hear of wheat being exported from India may surprise some persons: it is, however, not the less true; for while I was at the Mauritius in December 1828, the ship *Vesper* arrived there from Calcutta laden with wheat, which I was instrumental in causing to be taken to Sydney. A considerable quantity of American flour is also annually imported from the Brazils and Batavia in English bottoms.

Such constant importations of the first necessities of life in a country which ought long ago to have been able to support itself, tends still further to its impoverishment; because, as it produces nothing that can be exported in exchange, capital, which is so much wanted in the colony, and which is so indispensable to its prosperity, is thus sent away, which circumstance acts like a heavy and almost insupportable tax upon its industry.

Several attempts have been made to cultivate and establish the British grasses in Australia, but with, at best, only partial success. It is impossible for any person acquainted with agriculture to remain long in the colony unconvinced of the folly of attempting to cultivate them with a view to their permanent establishment in a soil with so dry a climate as that of New South Wales. The cultivation of some of the native species of grasses which resist droughts, and upon which cattle and sheep have

* I know of no situations in Australia adapted for the growth of rice. Gramme, which is a species of tare, would succeed well in almost any situation in that colony.

been found to thrive, would be productive of much greater benefit to the colony than the fanciful attempts at imitating English pastures upon a soil which is in general ill calculated for their production, even though the climate were favourable.

Amongst other misrepresentations to which I had been made to listen by interested parties before I left England, I was informed that the climate and soil were so favourable to the growth of white clover, that it had spread itself spontaneously in all quarters of the settled parts of the colony, from the small cultivated paddocks of the *old* settlers. Of course I provided myself in England with abundance of white as well as of red clover seed for the use of the Company; but when I arrived, could nowhere discover these spontaneous springings up by the way side in the settled parts of the colony, nor even a vestige of them. I learned, however, that when the land was well cultivated and manured, and sown with clover, a good crop was usually the result during the first *spring*; that during the heats of summer it disappeared, and revived partially after the autumnal rains, and after two or three dry seasons it disappeared almost entirely; and that the self savings were confined to the edges of pools and swamps, or other *moist* places, where the soil possessed considerable fertility. I wished, however, for the benefit of the Company, to furnish myself with the most ample proofs of the adaptation or not of the soil of Australia in its natural state to the production of these valuable grasses; and for the first three months therefore of my residence at Port Stephens, seldom rode into the forests without being provided with a plentiful supply of white clover seed in my pockets, and sometimes placed in a handker-

chief and attached to the front of my saddle, in such a manner as enabled me to scatter it as I rode along, in every situation where I supposed it would be most likely to vegetate ; and I frequently marked what I conceived to be the most favourable spots, with a view of ascertaining correctly the result of my experiments. I also scattered it very thickly on every part of the grounds about the establishment, and sowed at the same time a patch in the garden, with the view of proving whether the seeds still retained their vital quality after their voyage from England. The season being wet and warm was remarkably favourable for my experiment. A luxuriant crop soon appeared in my garden, but scarcely a plant was observed any where else during that autumn. In the following spring a few plants were discovered in one paddock only on the establishment, but these soon disappeared. In other situations I observed occasionally a tall, weak plant or two growing under the shade of a fallen tree, but even these soon vanished, and at the end of two years not a vestige of my clover was any where to be seen in the forests. The absence of this grass in all situations in the colony but those which I have before described, with one exception, would certainly lead any person to infer that the soil in its natural state is *not* favourable to the production of it in New South Wales, and to those who are acquainted with agriculture and the nature of clover of any kind, I need not say that a warm and dry climate must be unfavourable to it in any soil.

There are some of the English grasses which would no doubt stand longer in the cultivated ground than others, but the droughts are such as, in my opinion, to render hopeless any attempts to establish them permanently.

There is a species of fiorin called doob-grass, which was introduced from India, the herbage of which is much liked by animals. It is always green, and furnishes abundance of pasturage when every other species in the old settled quarters of the colony are parched and rendered useless by the summer's sun. There are patches of it in abundance on the margins of the more retired streets or roads in the town of Sydney, and it has always been a matter of surprise to me that this grass should have been so entirely neglected as it has been by the settlers, who, if they were accustomed to observe such things, could not avoid seeing it every time they visit that town. It spreads itself thickly over the ground, and forms a close green sward, upon which the cows and horses of the poorer inhabitants are frequently seen grazing. It was only among this grass that I saw white clover spontaneously growing in Sydney; this I accounted for partly from the mechanical action of the roots of the doob-grass upon the soil, which was thereby rendered more permeable to those of the clover, and partly from the protection which the close sward afforded to the plant after it had established itself. The constant top-dressings too of dust assisted to increase the soil, and to keep it more friable; and this, I have little doubt, had its effect in conjunction with the causes before described. I was so convinced of the value of this grass in New South Wales, that six months before I left Port Stephens I took some of it from the road-side at Sydney to the garden at the former place, with the view of cultivating it extensively. It grew very rapidly, and formed itself into a thick green turf, during one of the hottest and dryest summers that has ever been known in Australia.

Lucerne and tares produce abundant crops when properly managed on good soils and in moist summers, but during such seasons as the last, it has been proved that nothing but the doob and the native grasses have been able to resist the droughts, and to establish themselves permanently in the soils, while even the latter in the poorer parts of the country afford little or no food during summer. I beg, however, to be understood as referring to such ground only as has been fed and its surface exposed; for in most places it is covered in a state of nature with grasses, which obtain a height and preserve a freshness calculated most completely to deceive any person unacquainted with the colony. It is this which captivates the eye, and raises the imagination of every stranger who travels through the open and untrodden forests of Australia, and which occasions such frequent disappointments when contrasted with the same country after its herbage has been fed and its surface trampled and exposed to the scorching rays of the summer's sun.

It may be imagined, from what has been said, that hay is a scarce commodity in Sydney: I have known the price of clover and Rye grass hay to vary from £10 to £25 per ton; sometimes it was not to be obtained at any price. The stables in Sydney are supplied chiefly with a species of coarse grass from the shady dells and low grounds about the harbour, and from the banks of the creek which runs from Sydney to Paramatta: this is sold in small bundles at an excessive price by boatmen, who make a livelihood by the employment; a practice similar to that which prevails in most other warm climates which I have visited, and which arises, of course, out of circumstances above the control of man.

The climate is congenial to almost all kinds of European vegetables, which, in low situations and rich soils, are produced in greater abundance than might be imagined, considering the length of time during which the droughts sometimes prevail. This was exemplified in a garden established by me at Port Stephens in a low situation, which, by attentive management, produced vegetables most plentifully, while scarcely any were to be seen in gardens on higher grounds. During the autumn, when moisture sometimes prevails, the turnip flourishes well, as also the beet-root and mangel wurtzel, which in low, deep soils, grow to as large a size as I have generally seen them at home.

The potatoe is likewise produced in abundance in similar situations, and as large as in England, but by no means so good in quality, being of a watery nature, and wanting in those characteristics which distinguish the best cultivated kinds at home. Vast quantities of these roots are imported into Sydney, both from Van Dieman's Land and New Zealand, in which places they are produced of a quality not inferior to any I ever saw in England.

Tobacco grows wild on the shores where there is any considerable portion of good vegetable mould. This plant, in certain districts, might be cultivated to advantage in Australia; but, at present, errors have been committed similar to those practised in the cultivation of wheat, it having been planted, like the latter, on forest grounds, where the drought has repeatedly destroyed it. The low, rich brush soils, by the sides of rivers and creeks, afford the only chance of raising it with success; but as clearing and cultivating these are very laborious and expensive, few persons have made the attempt to any ex-

tent. Cotton also succeeds well on the coast-line. I tried a few acres of the species of sea-island cotton, with a sea air exposure. On my arrival in London I put a sample of the produce into the hands of a gentleman said to be one of the best judges of that article in England, and he pronounced it to be of the finest quality of any he had ever seen, the sea-island cotton not excepted. It was my intention to have sent home a few bales to be proved in the manufactories; but I left the Company's establishment just as the cotton was arriving at maturity, and learned that it was afterwards abandoned to the cattle, which trampled the plantation under foot. Enough, however, was collected for a sample, by a person whom I subsequently sent to Port Stephens for that purpose, previously to my departure for England. I am not aware that any English vegetables or fruits have failed in Australia, with the exception of the common bean and the gooseberry and currant; but even these succeed, I believe, in the more elevated and colder countries of Bathurst and Argyleshire. Apples and peas are exceedingly fine and well-flavoured, and when planted in proper situations, they are produced in abundance. Grapes will succeed in almost any situation throughout the country; few settlers, however, give themselves the trouble to cultivate them even in the commonest manner, their attention being too much engrossed in providing a subsistence, and in creating the common conveniences of life, to think about any thing else for many years. And those few who have attempted to manufacture wine, have not succeeded in a manner worthy of being noticed.

The raspberry and the blackberry are natives of Australia. The former is sometimes found in great abun-

dance in rich low soils, by the sides of rivers and streams. The stems of the plants are as large and as tall as those of the best cultivated sorts in English gardens, and the fruit is also as large and the same in appearance as the common raspberry; it has, however, but little flavour, and that which it has does not resemble the flavour of the European raspberry, and is not of an agreeable nature. The blackberry grows upon a species of bramble, resembling in its leaf what we see in England, but without thorns: it is much less common than the raspberry, and equally deficient in flavour. There are various berries, which can hardly be termed fruits, growing upon the creeping vines which I have so often described. They are of different sizes, from that of a common grape to a large muscle-plum, and of the colour and somewhat resembling the shape of the latter: they cut, however, more like an apple than a plum, and are slightly acid and astringent.

The wild fig-tree is found near the coast, generally growing in rocky situations by the sides of rivers. It is a low, umbrageous evergreen, bearing a small fig without flavour.

The shrub which is called the native cherry-tree, appears like a species of cypress, producing its fruit with the stone united to it on the outside, the fruit and the stone being each about the size of a small pea. The fruit, when ripe, is similar in colour to the Mayduke cherry, but of a sweet and somewhat better quality, and slightly astringent to the palate; possessing, upon the whole, an agreeable flavour. This, as far as I know, is the only natural production in Australia worthy the name of fruit, and the only one which a traveller would

turn a rod out of his path to pluck. There are some other productions of the vegetable kingdom, however, besides the raspberry and blackberry, which are of the same species as those found in England. Those which I observed are the following:—the wild mint, the water-lily, and the rush; the wild oat, the common meadow buttercup, and the wild tare; the timothy grass, rye grass, wire and oat grass, and the fiorin; the common dock and stinging nettle, and also the thistle and the fern, similar to those in England, as well as several other species of them, which do not exist in the latter country. These are all the English species of plants which I observed in Australia; but as I had little time to spend in botanical pursuits, or in any single occupation, there may be others which have escaped my notice.

CHAPTER XI.

SHEEP—CATTLE—HORSES.

THE main object of a settler's attention in Australia, should be the production of fine wool. Emigrants have been told in England, that there is little difficulty in effecting this to any extent required; that sheep increase with a rapidity unknown in any other country; that they are subject to few diseases, and those not of a virulent nature; and that ewes live and produce to a greater age there than in England. As far as climate is concerned, the production of the finest wool may be safely calculated upon; but as regards the other assertions alluded to, they are entirely without foundation.

The proportion of impotent rams and barren ewes in every flock is much greater than in Europe, and not more than one ewe in fifty produces twins; consequently there is never a sufficient quantity of twin lambs, as in English flocks, to place with the ewes which have lost their lambs; and as these casualties are even more common in the best regulated flocks in Australia than they are in England, the actual numbers must be diminished in proportion to the want of twin lambs, independent of any other causes. The richest native pastures in Austra-

lia do not produce, in any animals, the same flow of milk as in England; but the coarse-woolled and larger-framed sheep, yield a much greater quantity than those which approach more nearly to the Merino breed, and these latter are generally small and delicate in proportion to the fineness of their fleeces.

To those persons acquainted with the nature of Merino ewes in England, I need not observe that they have never been remarkable for the production of milk on the richest pastures. In Australia they exhibit a lamentable deficiency in this respect, which, together with the infrequency of twin lambs, and a disposition to barrenness above what is experienced in England, must clearly show that their natural progress of increase is of necessity less in Australia than in England, and this is borne out by the fact.

The sheep here are also not exempt from any of the common diseases incident to them in England; indeed, these evils prevail in particular seasons with still greater virulence, especially the rot, the scab, and the foot-rot. Unsound sheep are sometimes to be found on the best districts in every part of the colony. One individual of great notoriety lost, some years ago, no less than fifteen hundred in the neighbourhood of Paramatta; and in the year 1825, two other settlers in another quarter lost their entire flocks, amounting to above two thousand each. In a third district, which lies remote from those before alluded to, an individual nearly connected with the Australian Agricultural Company, lost in the years 1825-6, a very large proportion of his flocks. I was, during the last six months of my residence in Australia, a witness to the unsoundness of sheep in many situations remote from

each other. No person with whom I conversed upon the subject, was willing to acknowledge unsoundness in their flocks; but as none of them had been accustomed to the management of sheep before they left England, they were ignorant both of the cause and nature of the rot, and it is not matter of surprise that a disinclination should be evinced to admit the existence of so destructive a malady.

To any person, however, at all acquainted with this disease in England, its presence cannot be mistaken in Australia. I conversed with more than one person, who although admitting the existence of the poke and fluxes in the liver, stoutly denied that the disease was the rot. One of the first symptoms of it in Australia, is generally indicated externally, as in England, by a bag or pouch of water under the chin, called the poke, of the cause and nature of which no person well acquainted with sheep could for a moment entertain any doubts.*

The long seasons of drought, and the consequent bad water in Australia, being succeeded by heavy and continued rains, the previously parched pastures suddenly spring up, which being in their most tender stage greedily devoured by the sheep, operate unfavourably upon

* When a committee of the Australian Agricultural Company could purchase rotten sheep, and send home afterwards the exculpatory and valuable information, that these had taken the rot by their having been subsequently placed on saltings or salt marshes, (a well-known specific *against* rot;) and when it is known that this precious piece of wisdom was repeated and circulated in London, in a *printed* Report of the Australian Agricultural Company for 1828, nothing more need be said as to the knowledge which prevails of sheep husbandry amongst many of the old settlers in New South Wales; nor of the value of the information by which the proprietors of that Company have been enlightened upon this and many other subjects from the same quarter.

their constitutions, and frequently produce rot in those which are too delicate to resist the effects of such changes; and sometimes it extends throughout the flocks even on the soundest ground, in consequence of their reduced condition, from the causes already stated.

Previous condition, strength of constitution, and age, having much influence under such circumstances, the settler will therefore see how important it is to attend to these points, and to be prepared at all times, as far as practicable, to contend against the effects of such changes. In some parts of India, sheep have been known to be affected from similar causes, and losses to an immense extent sometimes occur there in consequence.

After a long and dry summer, both in England and Wales, whole flocks of sheep have been lost from the rot, upon dry limestone, and other sound hills, by their being kept too long on the young and tender grasses, which have suddenly sprung up after warm autumnal rains. I have known an instance of it myself, in one of the most celebrated and healthy limestone sheep-walks in South Wales. The suddenness and extent of the falling off in condition of the ewes of almost all classes in Australia, while they are suckling their lambs, is remarkable, as compared with ewes under similar circumstances in England; and shows a deficiency in the native pastures to support, without much good management, a very delicate and fine-woolled ewe in proper condition, and in such health as ought to be sustained during the period of her suckling. Such ewes are not in a condition always to resist the trying effects of sudden changes, which often carry them off; or if they survive, their constitutions are liable, without great care, to become so debilitated, as to render them

useless, and they die generally with pulmonary affections, dropsies, diseased livers, and rot. I am also of opinion, from what I saw and heard, that very few old ewes of any class die sound, or merely from the effects of old age. There may be some strong ewes which live to a considerable age, and continue healthy, but these are exceptions; for in all countries where early maturity occurs, it is well known that early decay is one of its consequences: and that this is every where manifested, both in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, in New South Wales, no person residing there, possessed of common sense and common observation, would pretend to deny.

The scab and foot-rot are common amongst sheep throughout the colony, which was too often proved to be the fact, by the introduction of them upon the Company's grant from many of the flocks out of which sheep were purchased for the Company. The former disease is more virulent and troublesome to get rid of here than in any other country with which I am acquainted; and the latter generally takes place to a very great extent, especially amongst the finer bred sheep, upon the commencement of wet weather. But besides the causes of disease already described as arising from the climate, there are, as in England, many situations and soils which would produce the rot in sheep independent of any other exciting causes; so that the sheep-breeders (the cultivators of the finer wools especially) will find plenty of employment for their attention in this respect, as well as in the preservation of their lambs after yearning from the want of milk, and from the still greater hazards in the latter respect, in proportion as they advance towards the main object of their attention—fine wool. When young Merino lambs become weak

from the want of proper support from their mothers, their lives hang, as it were, by a thread. In the event, therefore, of their not being protected during cold, and sometimes wet and stormy nights, losses will sometimes occur in a few hours amongst them to a ruinous extent.

Since my return to England, I have received information that on one establishment of recent origin in the colony, no less than three hundred Merino lambs were lost during one night only from these causes.

Whatever may be advanced as to the facilities in Australia for the production of the finest wool, those who are engaged in it will find it attended with many difficulties, and especially if upon a very extended scale. The original owners of sheep in the colony, till very recently, found a ready market in the newly arrived emigrants for all their aged, culled, and diseased ewes. They will now, however, experience very different results, since in every part of the colony other settlers can compete with them, and can supply the newly arrived emigrants with young sheep of a better quality, and at one fourth of the price which was demanded only a very few years since for those which were old and unsound.

If one of these original settlers, who so long blew the trumpet, and talked of profits, which, if they ever did exist, have long since gone by, were honestly to show a return of his flocks for 1825 and the two following years, when the extensive demand enabled him to sell off all his rubbish, and compare this return with the three succeeding years, when his sales ceased, and his old and diseased ewes died on his hands, or were slaughtered for the dogs; such an exposure of the *real* progress of increase and de-

crease in a given time, would best serve to enlighten the emigrant on this important subject. In the mean while, I have probably shown enough to put him upon his guard against the deceptions and misrepresentations that have so long prevailed on this matter.

Formerly, when an emigrant arrived in New South Wales, he was obliged to pay a high price for old and inferior sheep, but he had then the advantage of selecting his grant of land in the best districts, and of selling his increase of stock, or a portion of it, at high remunerating prices to those who followed him. At present he can purchase superior stock at very low prices, but he is at the same time subjected to the disadvantage of not being able to select land of good quality, and to those evils also which arise from the low prices of wool, and the want of a market for the increase of his stock, at prices which will remunerate him, supposing he finds a market at all; while the prices of every article which he has to purchase are by no means diminished in a corresponding ratio.

The settler will now find it more profitable in every respect to concentrate his flocks, and to direct his attention to the fineness of the fleece, rather than to the numerical amount of sheep of inferior wool; and in doing so he will see the absolute necessity of adopting a different and a better system of management than that which at present prevails in the colony.

During the first year of my residence in Australia I followed the practice which I found in existence there, but experience soon convinced me that it was not adapted to the delicate constitutions of the imported Merinos, nor was it, in my opinion, the best mode of managing flocks of any description in that country, where the climate and

soil produced effects in several respects the opposite of that which I had been induced to believe.

The practice throughout the colony is to divide the ewes into flocks of about three hundred each, which are *followed* (not *led*, as has been stated by others) by a convict shepherd during the whole of the day, and brought back at night to the fold, where they are counted and watched all night, with the view of protecting them from the native dogs.

The lambing season commences on the coast line about the month of March, which is the autumn, and also the season when the periodical rains are expected, which produce a supply of grass in greater abundance than in the spring. In the autumn and winter a good deal of wet and boisterous weather sometimes occurs, and as no sheds or other shelter are provided for the protection of the young lambs, great losses are often experienced upon these occasions, especially amongst the older flocks, and those which are most delicate and lowest in condition.

From the causes already described, the thorough bred Merinos, more particularly those bearing wool of first quality, are utterly unable to resist such hardships, and they require therefore to be protected and assisted during lambing by temporary and other sheds, and by a more liberal supply of milk for their lambs than that which can generally be drawn from their mothers in New South Wales.

Having experienced some difficulties at Port Stephens amongst the Merino flocks from the causes before stated, I had an opportunity afterwards of putting in practice a different system upon a very limited scale; and as it may be useful to future emigrants who engage especially

in the production of *fine* wool, I shall here briefly refer to it.

Some time previous to the lambing of a small number of ewes at the end of the season, and after I had become better acquainted with the nature of the climate, I caused them to be classed according to their ages and strength, and placed them at night under temporary sheds, constructed with hurdles and bark. I brought also to the same station some strong, coarse woolled ewes, whose lambs were taken from them when required, and supported on cow's milk, while the ewes were used as foster-mothers to the more delicate and valuable Merino lambs, whose mothers were unable to support them; some goats were also made use of in the same manner: and as I had the satisfaction of witnessing the most complete success of this plan, I commenced the building of sheds upon a scale proportioned to the whole of the numerous flocks of Merinos for the following season, and made arrangements with the concurrence of the most experienced shepherds, for the lambing down at the same place of a sufficient number of strong and inferior woolled ewes, to act as foster-mothers whenever the Merino lambs might require them. Before, however, the arrival of the lambing season, I was succeeded, as my published Narrative has shown, by an individual who abandoned these and other arrangements, and the results therefore which followed were just such as I had anticipated—they were such too as will occur at particular seasons as often as similar precautions are neglected, more especially to the north of the Hunter's River, where the country is more mountainous, and where, as far as my experience went, and that of an old shepherd who had resided in both districts, heavy

storms of rain and hurricanes are much more common than they are in the lower and undulating country in the districts of Sydney, Paramatta, and the Cow Pastures. If I am wrong, the further experience of others will correct me; but in the mean time, let those who are about to inhabit those districts take care of their Merino flocks, and not suffer themselves to be deceived by the representations of others who may be interested in misleading them.*

The prosperity of the settlers in New South Wales will hereafter depend upon the superiority of their wool, and I cannot therefore too strongly recommend them to provide, by every means in their power, against the influences of climate upon the constitutions of their sheep, which in proportion as they improve the quality of their fleeces, will demand a greater degree of care to preserve them in health. Where it can be effected, I would recommend the Merino flocks to be placed under sheds every night, and supplied with fresh litter every day, by which means their constitutions would be preserved, and the necessity of providing foster-mothers partly, if not entirely, avoided. The exposure of such delicate animals in an open fold

* When, from the loss of ewes, or from any other causes, it may become necessary, in the absence of other means, for settlers to rear valuable Merino lambs upon cow's milk, the feeding of them (which should be done by a quill in a bottle) should be assimilated as much as possible to nature, with reference to the quantities given at each feeding, and the number of times which during the day lambs have recourse to their mothers. The difference between this system and that which is usually adopted, of giving them as much milk as they choose to take twice or thrice only during the day, is just that which is found to exist between complete success or the contrary. Where large numbers are kept, it answers to employ a careful shepherd on purpose, as I found at Port Stephens.

to the heavy dews and cold nights, and sometimes storms and rains, succeeded, as they frequently are in the northern settlements of Australia during the day by a hot sun, with the thermometer varying from 60° to 70° in the shade, is frequently the cause of catarrhal discharges, and lays the foundation for rot and other diseases. Such a practice cannot but be detrimental to the health of any sheep in a warm climate, and especially to those of a more tender and delicate fibre, like those of the improved Merinos.

Vicissitudes of this kind are carefully guarded against by the most celebrated breeders at Geneva and in the south of France, both on account of the wool and the health of the sheep; and the benefit resulting from their plans in a warm climate, as well as that derived from the constant shelter afforded them in Saxony, has been fully shown by the complete success which has followed the adoption of them. Climate will do a great deal in New South Wales, but experience has proved that it will not, unassisted, do every thing.

In the Appendix will be found an account of the proceedings of the Rural Society or Company at Naz, near Geneva, with reference to the two important objects, namely, the health of the sheep, and the means of producing the finest wool. This paper was presented to me in the year 1825, in Paris, by the Viscount Perrault de Jotemps, one of the managers of the society of Naz. The greater part of it is equally applicable to New South Wales; and as the climate there appears more favourable to the production of fine wool than that of any other country, this natural advantage, combined with the adoption of the best system of management, would enable the growers of fine wool in Australia to overcome, in a great measure,

the difficulties I have pointed out, and afford them the fairest prospect of supplying the British market with wool of a quality superior to any thing which can be produced in any other quarter of the world.

CATTLE.

The breeds of cattle in Australia are mixtures of almost every kind produced in England. Convict, and other ships which sail from England and Ireland, generally carry out cows for the use of their passengers. These are purchased from time to time by the settlers, and have been crossed with importations from the Cape of Good Hope and India; so that, until recently, there were no distinct breeds in the colony.

In the year 1825, I took out for the Australian Agricultural Company very good specimens of the Durham and West Highland cattle, which succeeded well; and since that period several other persons have imported bulls of the former breed. There is a disposition in cattle of all descriptions in the colony to increase in size, and to improve in quality from their original stock, where they are well selected and kept in good condition.

With the exception of a few Highland gentlemen, who have emigrated within these few years, and one or two other individuals, (especially the late Mr. Baily, of Baily Park, who had been long established,) I saw no instance in the whole colony, of the least knowledge and judgment in the selection and breeding of cattle. Whatever of good, therefore, is to be found in them, must be attributed chiefly to chance and the climate.

Had the original settlers been men of business, or had they possessed only a tolerable knowledge of agricultural affairs, the colony would have been in a very different condition to what it is at the present moment. These consisted, unfortunately, with few exceptions, of half-pay officers of the army and navy, mechanics, shopkeepers, and emancipated convicts of various callings. From any of those classes little knowledge could be expected in the tillage of the soil, or in the art of selecting and breeding; and it remains, therefore, for the emigrants of very recent date to introduce agricultural improvements, and to cultivate with judgment the various improved breeds of animals which they have imported. One individual however, of the old school, whose original calling as a tailor and staymaker would hardly seem to qualify him for introducing agricultural improvements, professes, nevertheless, to have laid the foundation of a distinct and valuable breed of cattle, at which every person who has seen them, and possesses any knowledge of the subject, cannot but smile. They are, as Mr. Atkinson says, in his work on New South Wales, of the "Lancashire breed." He seems to have selected for his parent stock a variety of the thick-skinned Irish and Lancashire long horns, (breeds which have long been exploded by breeders and graziers who understand any thing of their business,) and persevered in the plan, till he has produced a race of coarse haired, long legged animals, with thin carcasses and high rumps. His bulls were selected of a light brindled colour, resembling, in this particular also, the most common Irish cattle; and many of them possess other characteristics avoided by good breeders, especially those of black eyes and noses. Many others of the old settlers

have their breeds also, and although they are of different kinds from those before described, still they are such as to prove that little skill and knowledge has been employed in the selection of the original stocks and their produce; but like Mr. Mac Arthur's, some few of the varieties are, notwithstanding, pretty well shaped, and at the age of five or six years, have been fattened up to considerable weights. I saw, however, a herd of cattle of a much better description on the farm of Captain P. King, R.N.; and some very fine specimens of cows in the year 1826, on the farm of the late Mr. Baily. They showed how much might be done by judicious selections, and attention to the breeding of cattle, from the best existing varieties in the colony. But that any settler who had selected the very worst, and persevered in restricting himself to that variety, should still have been able to find a market for his surplus herds, proves the want of knowledge on the subject in those who were purchasers, and may partly be attributed to the scarcity and high prices which formerly prevailed in the colony. The day, however, has gone by for all this; and settlers who entertain any hopes now of finding a market for their cattle, must be very particular in their breeds, because the amazing quantity in the market, and the low price of them, will by and bye prevent any demand for inferior animals, and render them of no greater value than the price of their skins. Such cattle only as possess the property of early maturity will hereafter pay for herding.

The improved breed of Durhams succeeds exceedingly well in the colony, and should therefore be sought after. Where they cannot be obtained pure, repeated crosses by good Durham bulls, and half-bred bulls in the

absence of the latter, with the best selected colonial bred cows, will produce a very desirable result, both as to flesh and milk. The Rev. Mr. Marsden introduced a polled or hornless breed of cattle some years since, called the Suffolks. They, however, do little credit to that breed, being in general coarse in the bone, and resembling the coarser breed of Lincolnshires more than the Suffolks.

The climate and open forests of New South Wales are every where, as I have before stated, admirably adapted for the production and rearing of cattle. The most common diseases to which they are subject at home, are not known in the colony. I never saw or heard of the two most destructive ones, the hoose and quarter-evil, which cause the death of so many of the weaned calves in Great Britain; so that the influences to which sheep are subject in Australia do not extend to cattle, which may be reared on the tops of the highest mountains, or on the lowest and poorest pastures where water can be obtained.

With reference to the adaptation of some of the unfed native pastures, and those which are not heavily stocked, in some parts of New South Wales, to the feeding as well as to the breeding of cattle, I will just state, that on my first arrival at Port Stephens, we found in the forest, very near to the harbour, where they had constantly grazed, three working oxen, which had been left there about eighteen months previously by a party of timber cutters. They were then much fatter than any cattle I had ever seen grazed in England, without corn or oil cake.

The heaviest, which was by no means a large-sized ox, weighed, when killed at Port Stephens, nearly twelve hundred pounds, or sixty score, and was so fat as to be

complained of by the people to whom it was served out on the establishment.

The same pastures continued afterwards to supply several hundreds of people daily, with beef which would not have disgraced any gentleman's table in London.

HORSES.

The climate and pastures of Australia are no less congenial to horses than to cattle. The original breeds were introduced chiefly from India and the Cape of Good Hope. Several of the studs consist of almost every variety of size and shape, from the poney to the cart-horse: these varieties sometimes appear in members of the same family, showing clearly in Australia what has been a thousand times proved in England, that no dependence can be placed as to what will be the produce between two cross-bred animals. There are some chance varieties, however, like those of the cattle, which are exceedingly well shaped and handsome, and such as would do no discredit to a hunting stable in England. The crossing of these by some of the best English blood horses, which have recently been introduced, will give a new and better character to the present breeds; and as there are now more horses in the colony than are required for the use of it, and they are exceedingly cheap, the same necessity exists as with regard to cattle, of producing animals of superior quality, and such only as will command a market at remunerating prices, both for the home supply and for exportation to India. Many valuable horses, of good size and shape, might be selected in the colony, although their general character is small, which

arises from no fault either in the climate or pastures; but rather from a defect in the original stock, and the subsequent neglect and ignorance of their owners.

The late Mr. Baily, who died before I arrived in the colony, appears to have been the only person, in former times, who understood the principles of breeding, or at least he seems to have been the only settler who paid any attention to it. I saw on his farm, soon after my arrival in the colony, a considerable number of very beautiful and valuable mares of colonial origin, which were afterwards sold off, and some of them subsequently passed into the hands of the Australian Agricultural Company. They served to show what the climate and native pastures would do in conjunction with proper selections and good management.

I observed in horses, as in all other animals in Australia, a disposition to increase in size from their original European and other stocks. This is a matter of great importance in the production of blood horses, which in able hands may be turned to great advantage, provided a market could be found for them in India. If I might judge, however, from some specimens of Indian bred horses from English stocks, which I saw at the Mauritius, I doubt whether so good a market could be found for Australian horses in that country as has been imagined. In that extensive part of the globe, where almost every variety of climate is found, Europeans, (especially if the country be thrown open), will probably be able to supply the market with good horses at a much cheaper rate than the settlers could from the eastern coast of Australia, as they could not safely calculate upon a voyage of less than from two to three months, by the difficult passages either

of Torres Straits on the north-east, or in the wind's eye by Bass's Straits and the western coast.

It is hard to say what British capital and skill would not effect in such a country as India, if thrown open to them; and I therefore think it would be unwise in settlers, or others intending to become so, to depend upon any calculations of profit from the breeding of horses in *any* part of Australia for the Indian market.

CHAPTER XII.

CONVICTS.

As soon as the men from a convict ship are landed, they are taken to barracks established in Sydney for their accommodation. The government generally selects from them such mechanics and other persons as may be required for the public service ; after which the numerous applications which are in hand from the various settlers are attended to, and the parties assigned are marched off to the country under the direction, generally, of an overseer or a constable. The dress in which these men arrive, and which is generally adopted for them afterwards by the settlers, is a checked shirt, a coarse jacket, and a pair of coarse duck trousers. Unless any of them become refractory, they are not encumbered with irons after their arrival. Many of them, I have no doubt, land in the colony with a sincere desire for reformation, and where opportunities are presented, I believe their good intentions are generally carried into effect.

As soon as a party of convicts arrives at a settler's station, their first employment is to build huts for themselves, which is done by forming the sides with split logs placed in an upright direction, with a covering of bark upon a roof of poles. These are considered the most per-

manent kind of buildings for convicts; but in the hurry of the moment they are sometimes preceded by others of a more temporary nature, consisting of only a frame-work of poles tied together with narrow slips of young bark, with a view of saving nails, while the sides are enclosed by sheets of thick strong bark. In a climate like that of New South Wales, the convict never quarrels with well-constructed huts of either kind; nor has he any reason, for he has always sufficient leisure and means to make his hut comfortable, and to keep it in good order, as well as to cultivate a garden; where these are not done it is generally his own fault.

The rations of food which a settler must allow to each convict are, 11 lbs. of flour, or a peck of wheat per week, with 7 lbs. of beef or 4 lbs. of salt pork, 1 lb. of sugar, 2 oz. of tea, and 2 oz. of tobacco. In addition he sometimes gets milk; but many of the settlers, when they allow milk, discontinue the tea and sugar.

The hours during which the convicts are required to labour, are from six in the morning till six at night, with an hour allowed for each meal of breakfast and dinner. The quantity of labour exacted is exceedingly moderate, and when taken at a task, which is frequently the case, it never, in any instance, exceeds two-thirds of what would be required of similar work in England. When a convict conducts himself well, he is treated precisely in the same manner as if he were free; no restraints are imposed upon him which he would not experience as a servant or labourer in England, excepting that he cannot at his own pleasure leave his master's service. If he is no longer wanted, he must be returned to the government, when he is generally re-assigned to a fresh master.

Men who are not radically vicious, find themselves, by pursuing good conduct, placed in a much better situation than that which they left in England; and where they have conduct and sense enough to take advantage of circumstances, they have the means of advancement beyond any thing which they could expect at home. If a convict, during a certain period, conducts himself well, he has a claim to a recommendation for a ticket of leave, which the government grants as an encouragement to well-doing. This gives him the liberty of residing in any district he may name, and of employing himself in any way he pleases. His period of probation before he can obtain a ticket is in proportion to the original term of his sentence, and in the event of his having misconducted himself, and received one punishment or more, the probationary period then commences from the date of his last punishment; thus, although he forfeits the intermediate space, the door is never finally shut against him, unless he is convicted of any crime which affects his life, or occasions him to be transported for life to the penal settlements of Norfolk Island or Morton Bay.

In cases of refractory conduct in their convict servants, settlers take them to the nearest magistrate, who has the power of ordering them to be flagellated, with certain limitations as to the number of lashes, provided the offence is made sufficiently clear upon the oaths of the complainants. A magistrate has also the power of sending them to the nearest government chain-gang, which is usually employed upon the roads or other public works, and in which the offenders are worked in irons, upon a short allowance of food, for a limited period, when they are unfettered and returned to their former masters.

As regards the public laws and regulations affecting convicts in New South Wales, I know not how, with only one exception, they could be better framed and administered than they are, so as to embrace the two great objects of punishment and reform ; and from what I have explained, it may easily be inferred that the objects of them have scarcely any other obstacles to contend against with reference to the latter, than those which arise from their own vicious dispositions, or from the inconsiderate and improper conduct of their masters towards them. Generally, however, they are well treated by their masters ; and it may be gratifying to those individuals who unfortunately have any convict relatives in that colony, to learn that the local government has never been insensible to the just complaints of convicts, as has often been proved by the removal of convicts from those masters who have been found to have treated them improperly. The exception to which I have alluded in the regulations for convicts, has reference to the assignment of them in Sydney and other towns, where the temptations to do wrong are so great as hardly to admit of their reforming, except in cases (which are *very* rare) where the moral feeling and strength of mind are strong enough to be uninfluenced by vice and bad examples. Neither does there appear to be any necessity for such assignments, because there are abundance of men who have become free, and many of whom would be glad of employment in families, for the want of which, and from their having been unaccustomed to any other kind of labour, they wander about in idleness and in bad company, and are at length numbered amongst the outcasts and dregs of society, so much complained of in the neighbourhood of Sydney.

In such a state of things character is of little value to a poor emancipated convict, who is turned adrift as soon as his sentence expires, because his place can be supplied from recent arrivals by a *fresh* and, *comparatively*, uncontaminated man, to whom no wages need be given as a matter of right, and who in his turn ultimately shares the fate of his predecessor.

If banishment to New South Wales be intended as a measure of reform as well as of punishment, it does not appear reasonable that offenders should be sacrificed, as it were, for the mere convenience and pecuniary advantages of the inhabitants of towns. They can now otherwise supply themselves with labourers and servants, and while there is an increasing demand for convicts in the country, where they have the best chance of being made generally useful and of reforming themselves, assignments ought not to be made as they have hitherto been. The inhabitants of Sydney would no doubt think it hard to be deprived of a privilege which they have so long enjoyed, and I am perfectly sensible that considerable inconvenience would in the first instance be experienced from it, but if they give encouragement to men who are emancipated by taking them into their service, and by requiring from them the production of a character, as they would in that case do, they would give value to that which has hitherto been regarded as useless, by a class of men who have not had sufficient motive or stimulus to urge them to its acquirement.

An opinion prevails too generally in England, that men who have been sent to jail, convicted and transported, generally remain felons in disposition, and are therefore not to be trusted. This I can assert, of my own know-

ledge, is a mistaken notion. The majority of them, in my opinion, are disposed to reform and to better their condition when opportunities are afforded. I was placed in a position where I had ample opportunities of making observations upon all classes of them, and of seeing them tried in every variety of situation and employment.

Assignments were made to me of boys and men from twelve to sixty years of age from all parts of the united kingdom, who had been guilty of almost every species of offence. Some of them had been long in the colony in the service of government, and with inhabitants at Sydney and with various other settlers in different quarters, who had returned them as incorrigible; and others were assigned to me fresh from the ships as they arrived, both from England and Ireland. Being obliged, from the isolated situation in which I was placed, to act in the double capacity of magistrate and agent, every complaint of the overseers, as well as every offence, was brought before me, which gave me opportunities, in addition to my daily intercourse with them on matters of business, of knowing the history and the conduct of almost every one of them, amounting to nearly four hundred. They were generally classed under free overseers, according to their abilities and conduct, and their allowance of rations was the same as I have before described. In order to give them a motive for behaving well, and to attach them to the interests of the establishment, I allowed them to perform, as often as it was practicable, task-work, and when this was finished I permitted them to work on their own account, and paid them for it by such articles from the store as they chose to take, while on Saturday evenings only they were allowed to have a gill of rum also on

account of their work. Their hours of labour were as before described, excepting that I allowed them an hour and a half for dinner, and the Saturday afternoon from two o'clock to themselves.

Those whose employments would not admit of task-work, such as carters, shepherds, &c. and who could not find time for extra labour, were allowed the value of from one to two shillings per week from the store. All this, however, depended upon their good behaviour; and upon proof of the contrary, the allowance was discontinued so long as appeared necessary.

The effect of these encouragements, and the promises which I held out of advancement to situations where I had it in my power to make them more respectable, had a very beneficial effect; and although there were individuals upon whom no good impressions could be made, either by coercive or conciliatory measures, still the greater part of the men under my charge conducted themselves well, and many of them in the most exemplary manner.

In 1826 I had from the penal settlement of Port Macquarie an assignment of fifty men, who were found to have been illegally, although perhaps not undeservedly, convicted and transported thither by the colonial magistrates several years previously, and they were consequently removed thence as soon as this was discovered. Most of these men were very much disposed to profit by the encouragement I held out to them, and many of them proved to be amongst the best conducted men on the establishment. Indeed, I experienced more gratitude from several of these very men, than has ever fallen to my lot from any class of people either at home or abroad.*

* The following is one instance which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of putting upon record. I had, previous to my quitting Port Stephens,

The cause of this is obvious enough. Men who are not utterly abandoned, but who feel themselves cast off and have little hopes of ever being considered respectable, eagerly lay hold of any immediate opportunities which promise to raise them from such a state of degradation, and they are therefore disposed to repay acts of kindness shown to them with a feeling of gratitude and warmth of attachment which could not probably have been excited under other circumstances.

In the management of convicts, however, the exercise of firmness is no less necessary than that of kindness. The *certainly* that punishments, however mild, will follow the commission of offences, I found to be more efficacious than their severity, and that working in irons for certain periods upon a reduced allowance of rations, and solitary confinements, produced incomparably better effects than the lash. So much indeed were the former dreaded, that on the conviction of offenders they have frequently petitioned me to commute them for the latter. In all cases, however, it is right to show them that their situation is

recommended some of these men for tickets of leave. A few weeks before I quitted the colony, one of them, who was a prisoner for life, obtained an order for his ticket, and immediately repaired to me at a considerable distance on the Hunter's River, to thank me for it. I was then preparing for a journey into the forest, with a servant whom a friend had lent me; he offered to accompany me also, and on my reminding him that he could as a mechanic obtain seven shillings per day at Sydney, and that I could not then afford to pay him any thing, he replied by earnestly begging me to send away the borrowed servant, and allow him to take his place upon the same terms; to this, however, I could not accede, and after waiting several days on the establishment of a friend, where he also remained and employed himself by the latter's permission, he renewed from time to time his requests, till at length he took the servant's place, and never afterwards quitted me till the pilot's boat took him and another faithful servant (an emancipist) from the ship as she was proceeding out to sea for England.

never hopeless, that the offence is forgotten as soon as they have paid the penalty by the punishment, provided their conduct give any hopes of amendment; and upon every occasion, where there were any circumstances to justify it, I always endeavoured to show that I was still disposed to place confidence in them.

I have before stated that I always slept when at Port Stephens in the midst of a large body of convicts with my doors neither bolted nor locked, and that I never was molested or lost to the value of sixpence from my apartments, nor was I ever better or more faithfully served, either in or out of the house, than by the convict servants whom I constantly had about me. I hope therefore what I have already stated, will, without the necessity of my adducing, as I might, many other facts of a gratifying nature, cause others to think less harshly in general of this class of banished human beings; for although some of them may be past redemption, yet there are many who, although apparently irreclaimable, require but encouraging opportunities to revive the latent sparks of virtue and good feeling that lie dormant within their breasts.

There is little encouragement for persons emigrating to Australia to take out free servants, who generally leave their masters, either from the temptation of better wages, the corrupting influence of others, or with a view of carrying on some traffic or trade of their own. Agreements in writing, however valid, are of little avail, if the servant, as is almost without exception the case, is disposed not to remain with his master. I will relate a case in point, which will serve to illustrate this question better than any thing else I can say, because the alternatives presented are applicable to all others, and are in constant

practice. A mechanic, with his wife and one child, hired himself to a person about to emigrate from England. The man was to receive £25, and the wife £10 per annum, with board and lodging for the family. The expence of passage out, which was £100, was also paid by the master. They had not long landed in Sydney, before the man learned that they had hired themselves at less wages than they could obtain from others in the colony. They took care soon to inform their master of this, and showed signs of uneasiness. He, however, felt himself protected by his agreement, and took them to his grant. Disagreements soon arose between them; the servant felt himself of great value in the colony, and grumbled, and was unhappy, because he was receiving less wages than others, forgetting, as they always do, that £100 had been paid for the passage out for himself and family. At length he refused his work, and was taken by his master before a magistrate, who committed him to prison for two months. At the expiration of this period the servant was returned to his master, when he feigned sickness. The apothecary, who lived thirty miles off, was then brought to him, and pronounced him an impostor, and ordered him to his work; but he performed so little of it, and so badly, as to render it impossible for his master to go on with him. The trouble and loss of time in taking him to a magistrate again, at a distance of above twenty miles; the loss of his services while in prison; the bad example of his conduct to the convicts; and the great expence which was daily incurred for the wages and rations of a worse than useless servant, rendered it at length a matter of prudence, and almost of necessity, for the master to get rid of him; and accordingly, the agree-

ment was cancelled, and the man and his family sent about their business.

The temptations to free servants in Australia to become independent are too great to be resisted by the very best of them. The idea by which they are at first influenced is that of acquiring sufficient property to enable them to return home and live in a station above that in which they were formerly placed; while they remain with their masters, they see they cannot acquire that independence, but feeling that they could do it if freed from their engagements, they manage to release themselves after a short residence. The masters too soon lose the prejudices they carry with them from England against convicts, and finding them more serviceable than they had been led to believe, and more under their control from the summary power over them with which the law invests magistrates, are generally not indisposed on their part to be released from the payment of £25 or £30 per annum for an unwilling servant, while they can sometimes be supplied from the government with perhaps more effective men for nothing.

The ideas, however, with which the free servants are first intoxicated soon vanish; they are thrown into bad company, which, together with the warmth of the climate, bring on habits of drunkenness. The enjoyments and dissipations of the present, and their newly-formed connexions, extinguish in them, in a great measure, their former desire to return home; desultory and bad habits are contracted, and at length confirmed; their constitutions become debilitated; the means of independence which they calculated upon have been neglected or squandered, and they are generally left without the power, as well as the inclination, to return from their voluntary

exile. But although the majority of free servants thus neglect the opportunities of acquiring an independence from the causes I have stated, still, those who have sufficient prudence and strength of mind to escape from the evils by which they are constantly beset, have frequently amassed property to a considerable amount, which has generally been invested either in the purchase of cattle, or of houses in Sydney.

The Swan River Settlement is, it seems, to be conducted without convicts. If those who petitioned the government not to send any to that place, had been practically experienced in the settling of a new country, I am inclined to believe that their petitions would have been the reverse of this. Suppose cases should occur there, with reference to servants, like that which I have related, (and no doubt they will,) what resource has a settler in such a situation? If men will be idle and refractory in the service of a master to whom they are indentured, for one half of the wages which will be offered to them by others, what is to be done? Human nature will be the same at Swan River as at other places, and the hacknied excuse for dishonourable proceedings, "If I don't another will," will be resorted to there as well as elsewhere.

Men who have no money, and can bring their labour (no matter at whose expence) to a market in which there is such a high competition for it, will search for and acquire money from those who possess it in the greatest quantity, and leave certain other classes to shift for themselves. In fact, settlers who have ample property in their pockets and their stores, and labourers who possess it in their sinews and bones, will probably remain toge-

ther, and fight their way through difficulties; but others of small means, (and I say it with feelings of sincere pity,) must either labour for the capitalists eventually, or return home before they have sunk their all. I am at a loss also to know to what market they can send their agricultural produce, if they get any, unless to Sydney, which is a frail dependence; and how they can expect remunerating prices for grain produced at so high a cost as that of free labour, in such a distant quarter of the world, and without even a demand for it from the government on the spot, which having no convicts employed on public works, cannot become a market, as in former days at Sydney.

The female convicts are assigned, on their arrival at Sydney, to such married settlers as make applications for female servants, provided the applicants are considered sufficiently respectable. Those which are not assigned are sent to the factory at Paramatta, where they are classed, and employed according to their conduct and abilities, and are rewarded, or punished by privations, hard labour, and confinement, as they may deserve. When servants do not conduct themselves properly in their situations, they are usually sent to the factory, and treated accordingly. The practice, however, of keeping them there in great numbers after they have been sent back for faults, is not, in my opinion, calculated to reform them any more than if they were assigned to persons of equivocal characters. Every female convict, when she arrives at Sydney, (unless of the most openly abandoned character,) ought to have a chance of perfecting a reform, which it is fair to suppose has been commenced since her conviction; and the particularity

therefore of the governor, in assigning them to none but respectable persons, is a very humane and beneficial regulation: but when they have been returned from their service for improper conduct, there is, I think, much less chance of a reformation in the factory, amongst a crowd of others of the same stamp, than if they were assigned to persons of a different and less respectable class than before. If the same scrupulous regulations in the assignments are adhered to as with reference to others of better characters, those whom the more respectable people will not have from the badness of their conduct, must be shut up in the factory during the period of their sentence, which in some cases would be for life, corrupted and corrupting all who are associated with them. Rather than do this, and considering the great disproportion between the sexes in the colony, I would assign them to the first persons who applied for them, provided they could prove they had the means of supporting them honestly and with decency. The government would always have the power to recal them on complaints of maltreatment, or other improper conduct; while many of them would, without doubt, get married, and some would be stimulated by motives of pecuniary interest, or by latent feelings of propriety and virtue, to become in the end respectable wives and mothers. I am persuaded that the chances of good are greatly on the side of more general assignments. This would not at all injure or offend public feeling in Australia, while the present state of society in the colony appears to call for a change, in this respect, in the present system.

CHAPTER XIII.

EMIGRATION.

THE present situation of a considerable portion of the population of Great Britain, and the various arguments which have in consequence been put forth in favour of emigration to the colonies, have created so much interest in the public mind at the present moment, that I cannot forbear, upon this occasion, from offering a few observations upon the subject.

If we could believe all that we are told of the facilities with which persons can establish themselves in new countries, and the benefits which are to be derived both to the emigrants and to those who are left to fill their places at home, the means of bettering the condition of mankind are of the easiest attainment and of the most gratifying nature; and one could never cease to wonder how it is, that so many of the good people of Britain should be such simpletons as to remain as they do, within reach of the promised blessings, without making a simultaneous effort to possess them. Nothing indeed can be more delightful than the pictures which have been presented to the public, and which have induced many to go in quest of the realities. Some few, perhaps, by dint of money

and perseverance, may have been fortunate enough to find them, although I will venture to say, that the greater part have been disappointed and discomfited. The plans, however, which are sought to be carried into effect by those who wish well to their country and to their fellow-creatures, appear to have been formed for the purpose of relieving the country from the burthen of those classes who cannot support themselves at home; but I fear the principal effect has been to entice only the better and more profitable part of the population from their homes, to encounter difficulties and privations far greater than they had before experienced, while the deserving paupers, the idle, and the dissolute, are left in their original positions, in which the great mass of them must remain, until some means are adopted to improve their condition upon their native soil.

There can be no doubt that a vast deal of unoccupied land in the colonies might be made to support such poor emigrants as it is proposed to expatriate, provided the means could be furnished for their subsistence previous to the period required to make this land productive; and provided also that a market could afterwards be found for the sale or exchange of as much of their produce as would enable them to procure other articles necessary to civilized beings. The difficulties of clearing a sufficient quantity of land for the support of a family, and the time which it takes to do this, in all unoccupied countries, even under the most favourable circumstances, as well as the uncertainty of its produce, are not in general sufficiently considered. During a certain period, the families must be supported by supplies from a distance, and however little they might be content with, still the price, cost,

and expence of conveyance would be very considerable, while the difficulty of obtaining them in regular supplies in uncleared, and of course, unoccupied countries, would be a privation which appears never to have been thought of. If small numbers of individuals, with means at their own disposal, experience difficulties of this and other kinds, as well as from the uncertainty of their first crops in particular, what would be the situation and ultimate fate of such numbers as the promoters of pauper emigration would send out? But to say nothing of the difficulties and troubles inseparable from the life of a newly-arrived settler, let the least possible expence for the necessary equipment of a family and their passage out be considered; and add to this, their required support before the first crop arrives, as well as the necessaries with which they ought to be provided before they can sell enough (supposing a market) to provide them for themselves; let all this, I say, be fairly estimated, and as fairly considered, and then let the most sanguine ask themselves whether this expensive expedient could tend to the effectual relief of a country where millions could be spared from its population without any sensible diminution of it. If masses of individuals could be put on shore in the colonies without expence, and made immediately to provide for themselves, something by way of reduction of numbers at home and relief might soon be effected; but this would be impossible: for of what use would grants of land be to them, without the means of support until they could make the soil productive, unless indeed they could, like the aborigines of the country, live upon grubs and fern-roots, and clothe themselves in the skins of the wild animals of the forests?

Before emigration of the poor and distressed classes could be effected to any available extent, a country must be located by persons who have firmly established themselves, and who possess the means of employing and paying them as labourers immediately on their arrival. The United States of America is the only country, I believe, which could afford to pay and employ such numbers of our spare population as would, at the present moment, materially benefit us; but to that country England would not of course send them. Canada could receive some; but here even the government would be compelled to take care of such as could not find immediate employment, and these, if any good is to be effected at home, would amount to more in number than could be provided for in such a situation.

The idea of removing poor half-starved and ragged paupers, with their families, to new and distant countries, with the view of making them cultivators of their own soil, or on their own account, has always appeared to me to be the height of absurdity. And to those who *really* know any thing of the manner in which emigrants are obliged to proceed in the colonies, and the means which they are required to possess before they can scarcely establish themselves, it must be fully apparent that such notions as have been entertained, of sending off the surplus population of England to the colonies, are utterly impracticable. No country perhaps in the world can be more unfavourable for such schemes, than that of New South Wales, where the general poverty of the soil, the want of navigable rivers, and the extreme uncertainty, as I have already shown, of its harvests, are sufficient, I should think, to prevent any attempts of that kind in that

quarter of the globe. Mr. T. P. Macqueen, however, late M. P. for Bedfordshire, in a pamphlet which he has lately published on the subject of the distresses of the country and on emigration, has hinted at the propriety of such an attempt, at which I confess I feel no little degree of surprise, after the experience which he has had of the repeated failures in the harvests, upon the land which he possesses in that colony, from causes which neither he nor any one else can justly attribute to any thing but the unfavourable nature of the climate to the production of grain. If Mr. Macqueen had given to the public *his* five years' labours and expences in New South Wales, under far better management than obtains there in general, or than could be expected from the poor and unfortunate beings he would send thither, it would have gone very far towards settling the question upon that point in the minds of his readers, although it does not appear to have deterred him from the expression of his wishes. In the present state of things in England, it is perfectly clear that there are more people in it than are profitably employed; and the question, therefore, of what is to be done with them, is one which forces itself perpetually upon the mind. We see equally clearly that the power of machinery, the facility of procuring the means of putting it in action, and the great quantity of available capital we possess, are, and ever will be, more than sufficient, when combined, to supply, under any circumstances, all the demands that can be made upon them.

We cannot, however much it might be desired by some, impose a *direct* tax upon the ingenuity of man, with the view either to reduce the activity of its present amount, or to retard its future progress; nor can we, if

we would, from its great abundance, annihilate in the bowels of the earth as much fuel as would reduce the manufacturing power nearer to the limits of demand. The subterranean stores with which nature has so bountifully furnished us, and the ingenuity of our countrymen, have thrown temptations in our way; a colossal power has been discovered, by the aid of which the labours of man are and will hereafter be dispensed with to an incalculable amount, in the production of most of those articles which supply his artificial wants. We must therefore ultimately throw open our fields to be cultivated as far as may be required, by the manual operations of our surplus population, or send these off, *if we can*, to the colonies. To continue long to support millions in idleness, or in *unproductive* industry, will be impossible, and yet how is industry in such a state of things to be made continually productive, but by the manual cultivation of the soil by the spare population at home, and by manufacturing more extensively for the inhabitants of other nations, who, upon certain conditions, would be glad to become our customers upon a scale that would afford us extensive relief?

Employment to a limited extent has been found or rather created in different quarters of the kingdom for the unemployed poor, and the hand of charity has been liberally extended towards them; but these cannot go beyond a certain point, and after all are but expedients of a temporary nature. It is the soil (and it is in vain to talk of any thing else) which must *ultimately* become the great resource of all nations for the employment and support of a dense and superfluous population; inasmuch as its immediate returns are found to satisfy their wants in propor-

tion to the *quantity* and *quality* of the labour bestowed upon it. In this age of discoveries and improvements, it is a monstrous inconsistency, a blot in the annals of political science and human wisdom, to see so many of our agricultural labourers starving in the midst of plenty, or supported in idleness from resources which were originally intended only for the support of orphans, and the aged and infirm. If the enormous sums which are thus actually sunk by parishes were employed in the hiring and cultivating of farms, upon which these now idle paupers could be employed, their labour might be made productive, and the parishes in a great measure, if not entirely, relieved from the burthens of which they have so long and so loudly complained.

Much of the land which is now so badly managed by farmers whose means have unfortunately been exhausted, (or untenanted, and therefore frequently not managed at all,) might by the spade and the hoe in the hands of the superfluous labourers be made exceedingly productive. The benefits that would arise to all parties immediately concerned, as well as to the community, are too obvious to be further dwelt upon; and if this system were seconded by the allotting of cottage gardens to labourers upon a liberal scale, and at such rents only as a farmer would pay for the land, the distress of the agricultural poor at least would be speedily and happily relieved.

The public could in no way better bestow their charity, and in many instances employ a portion of their spare capital, than by forming associations in every part of the kingdom, (having reference to local convenience,) for the purpose of occupying land to be cultivated by the unemployed poor, whether of the agricultural or manufacturing

classes, confining of course the employment to the parish or district which the respective establishments were intended to relieve. These farms would always be resources in cases of need, and if managed properly and upon simple principles, as they might be, every charitable donation might be made to reproduce. A free importation of grain, and more liberal arrangements as to all other exchangeable commodities, would also further relieve the manufacturers, by causing other nations, especially America, in a great measure to cease manufacturing, and to employ their labourers in extending cultivation over their fertile and almost boundless tracts of unoccupied country.

The rapidly increasing population of America would require our manufactures in return for their grain and other produce of their soil and climate to an incredible amount. The clearing of their woods and forests, and the cultivation of the soil, are the means by which she would naturally wish to increase her population and her strength. The vastness of her territories is in effect but a name, and will continue to remain so until they are occupied by man, and rendered productive by his labours ;—and can it then for a moment be supposed that she, or any other nations similarly situated, would concern themselves about manufacturing while they could more profitably employ their people in virtually extending their territory, and receive in exchange for the various produce of their soil, our manufactures at so much less cost than they could produce them? America knows her own interests, and will increase and multiply whether we like it or not. Let us then take the advantage of it. For ages to come we might profit by her exertions, as well as by those of other nations,

by receiving grain and commodities which we cannot produce, upon the most liberal principles of exchange, and giving in return the produce of our manufacturing labour at prices below their competition.

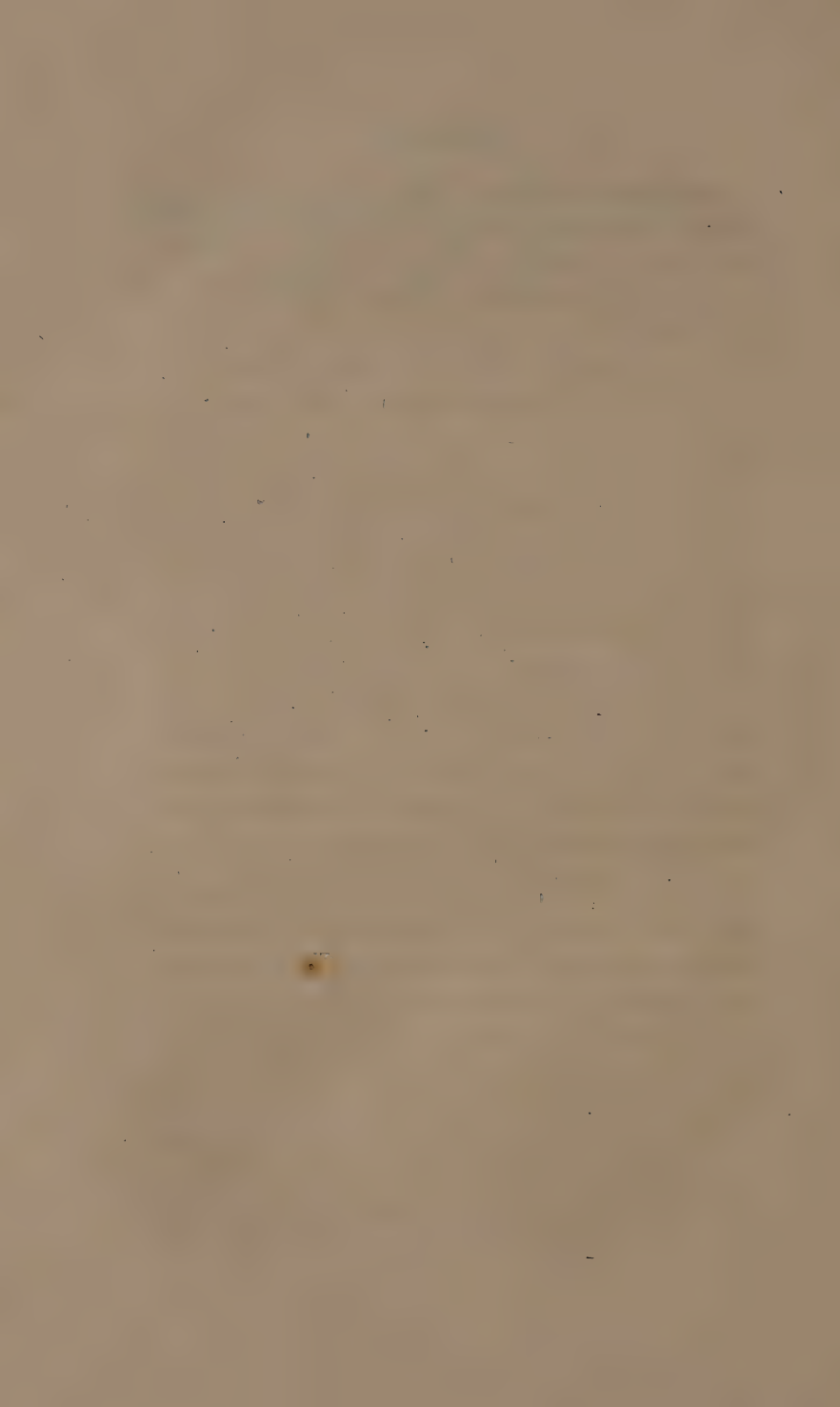
Foreseeing as we ought to do, from the experience of the past, the effects of our increased and increasing population, and that which will arise from the continual discoveries and improvements in chemistry and mechanical powers, we ought, before America and the other nations of the earth are able to dispense even temporarily with the fruits of our mechanical labours, to provide gradually by a system of manual operations on the soil for the checks which adventitious circumstances will from time to time give to the prosperous industry of our manufacturers, as well as for the period, however remote, when that soil must in a great measure be made permanently to support our own population. But if, with all our available capital, and other means to boot, we choose to shut ourselves up as it were, and to throw other nations, and especially America, prematurely upon their own resources, it would seem, from our present condition, that we must either provide *immediately* for our surplus labouring population of all descriptions, as well as for those employed in agriculture upon our own soil, by some such arrangements as I have pointed out, or stand by as we do now, and continue to witness the destruction by actual starvation, and by disorders consequent upon insufficient food, of a vast portion of our fellow-creatures, until the premature hand of death shall reduce them to the limits of demand.

The effect of an influx of imported grain upon our agricultural produce would undoubtedly be to lower the price of it, and it might throw some of the inferior land

out of cultivation ; but it does not therefore follow that it would be unproductive. It would still produce human food in flesh, cheese, butter, as well as wool, in the room of grain ; if these should be reduced in price also, the benefit would be the more extensive, and if the time ever arrived for again placing this land in a state of tillage, its fertility would be increased in proportion to its period of previous rest.

It is a favourite argument with some, that a metallic currency, a free importation of grain, and consequently cheap food, would effect the destruction of England. How this could be occasioned by such means I am at a loss to know, neither can I see the ruin which would necessarily be brought upon the landed proprietors who are not virtually in that state already by contingent circumstances, with which the public have nothing to do, or from their own imprudence. If rents should be lowered by these means, the landed, in conjunction with other interests, would compel the taxes to follow, and the tenantry must therefore be ultimately benefited in both respects, as well as by a reduction in taxes for the poor upon the principles I have pointed out, while the cost of their landlord's establishments would be reduced in proportion. All things would bear a *relative* value, and if no exertions and no new arrangements were made by landed proprietors to reduce the wages of their servants and attendants, and to place their establishments in other respects upon a footing to meet such a state of things, the fault, in my opinion, would rest with themselves, and not in a system which would do no real injustice to them, while it would be productive of benefit to almost every other individual in the community. If some such measures as I have alluded to

were carried properly into effect, I am firmly persuaded that the apparent causes as well as calls for emigration, and also the ceaseless cries of the starving multitudes, would, like other passing evils of the day, soon cease and be forgotten.



APPENDIX.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

TREATMENT OF FLOCKS;.

ADDRESSED TO THE PURCHASERS OF SHEEP FROM THE
NAZ ESTABLISHMENT.

THE system now in practice for breeding Merino sheep in France, is diametrically opposed to that which we have adopted and followed for the last twenty-five years, and to which we are indebted for the superior quality of our wool; we therefore think it our duty to describe and explain to those persons purchasing of us, the manner in which our flocks are managed, and under what circumstances they are bred, in order that those who possess themselves of any of these valuable sheep, should not only fully understand how to perpetuate this superiority in the continuance of the breed, but also gradually to produce the same beneficial effects through the whole of their flocks.

A widely-spread prejudice has induced the belief that we are indebted to climate alone for the qualities of the wool for which certain countries are celebrated. Thus, prior to

the introduction of the Merinos into France, it was said they would degenerate there, because they had not the sun of Spain. The same was said of Sweden, Saxony, and Germany. But what was the result? The Merinos did degenerate wherever the proper management in breeding was not pursued; they preserved their fineness wherever a tolerable degree of judicious care was observed; and they gained in fineness, silkiness, and elasticity, without diminishing in any degree the strength of the wool, wherever there was a thorough knowledge of the subject, and a strict attention to its requisite details. And yet the sun of Spain shines on none of these countries. Are not these facts sufficiently convincing? Though self-evident, still we do not expect much advantage to be derived from them, for prejudice, like those creeping plants which cast roots from each branch, will spring up again, and say that the snows of the Jura are indispensable to the production of the fine wools of Naz, the climate of the north of Germany to those of Saxony, and the atmosphere of Hungary, Bohemia, and Moravia, to the fine wools derived from these countries.

The real causes of the qualities of wool are, 1st. the choice of the breeding animals; 2nd. the system adopted with regard to their food, their housing, &c. We shall notice each of these causes separately, and we shall take care to mention the practice followed at Naz, and which has been so eminently crowned with success.

I.—CHOICE OF THE BREEDING ANIMALS.

We shall not have much to say on this subject, for the influence of the fleeces of the ancestors on those of the descendants is sufficiently established.

The breed ought to be pure, to prevent degeneration. We mean, by purity, a long and uninterrupted series of alliances

between the members of one family. If this condition is fulfilled, experience has taught us to expect in the progeny five-eighths equal to the fineness of the father, one-fourth equal to that of the mother, where her fleece was but little inferior to that of the ram. There then remains one-eighth of the descendants superior in fineness to their sire. These proportions are constant, and where they are not observed, we may conclude almost with certainty, that the flocks are of an impure origin. It is in these circumstances, inherent in pure bred animals, that we are to find the means of progressive improvement, and of advancing with rapid steps towards that perfection to which nobody as yet knows the limits. Let the choice of the breeding animals, particularly of the tups, be annually made from that one-eighth which surpasses its ancestors in fineness, and success is then certain. We have done this at Naz, and we have no doubt that the system has been pursued elsewhere, but what is the difference in the results obtained here and elsewhere? At Naz nothing has complicated the choice of the animals, for having nothing in view but the fineness of the wool, we sacrificed to its attainment the beauty of the staple, the size of the carcase, and every thing which was not subordinate to the one paramount object. Elsewhere the exclusive aim was not the *fineness*, it was the *quantity* of wool, the size and imposing shapes of the carcase. No doubt they wished for fineness; but was it not difficult to find this united with the character of the wool they wanted, as well as with the most desirable shape and size of carcase? But it is in general impossible ever to preserve, much less to improve the fineness of wool, when the weight of the carcase is to be increased. We are convinced of this impossibility from the most incontrovertible evidence.

II. SYSTEM OF FEEDING.

The instinct of animals, in a wild state, doubtless leads them to the quality and quantity of food which they should take to preserve their health, or rather their well-being. Nature has, in this state at least, endowed them with such physical powers, that they may at times indulge in excess with impunity, and at other times experience privations without inconvenience. Animals in a domestic state are very different in this respect: both indulgence and privation would prove injurious to them. After having become the slaves of man, they seem to renounce that instinct which was given to them for their preservation, and not only eat as much as they can, but also whatever they find. In fact, we have observed them so long and so attentively, that we cannot doubt this depraved appetite exists amongst fine-woolled animals. We have noticed the following results: wethers accustomed to one kilogramme (2.204 lbs. avoirdupoise) a day, have eat as much as $2\frac{1}{4}$ and $2\frac{1}{2}$ k., and would have eaten more had they been allowed. This excess of food has increased the size of some of the animals out of all proportion to that of their breed; has brought others to an immense fatness; while in some it has generated disease. In the first instance, the increase of weight has uniformly, without exception, deteriorated the fineness and silkiness of the wool; in the next, diseases sometimes fatal have been the results of this fatness.* With regard to the grazing, we

* This applies very forcibly to Merinos in Australia, when allowed to feed *ad libitum* on the young grasses, which are produced by the rains after long droughts. The condition of the ewes in such cases is improved to fatness for a time; but when the causes cease they suddenly fall back again, and are rendered liable to diseases, from which they sometimes die in great numbers. R. D.

must also attribute the same disorders to it, when we see valuable flocks feeding with an uncontrolled avidity on grass covered with dew and rain, which is nothing less than poison for them—on artificial meadows and roots, where they accumulate a degree of fat at once prejudicial to their health and to the fineness of their fleeces.

The consequences of this disorder, and even its very existence, have not been sufficiently acknowledged by the sheepholders; for how many abandon the most substantial and nourishing meadows, to the irregular appetites of these animals, and that with the intention of improving them? It is thus that the fleeces and sheep of Spain have been brought, in France, to double their original weight. But did the owners calculate that this double quantity of wool cost them thrice the sum to produce, while at the same time it was worth only one-half of an equal weight in its primitive state? We do not think they could have made this calculation, or they would have returned from an error as fatal to the industry of France as it is to the real interests of the breeders, and we should no longer hear those loud expressions of astonishment at the high prices so eagerly given by manufacturers for superfine wools, nor those complaints at the difficulty with which the less fine wools are disposed of.

But we will abandon the task of spreading through France the breeding of Merinos on its true bases to the common course of time, contenting ourselves at present with explaining to those who have judged it prudent to purchase at Naz, how, with so little expense of food, we have attained that fineness of fleece with which they have been struck, and that hardness of constitution which prolongs the career of our sheep beyond the ordinary limits. We owe them this advice, and we give it with the greater eagerness, as it would be painful for us to observe the fruits of years of care and attention bestowed on the perfecting of our flocks lost by

bad and improper treatment when removed into the flocks of others.

Our lands are sound, and this is an indispensable condition. They are more or less grassy, according as the season is more or less rainy. Whatever be their condition, the flocks stay on them only for a time sufficient to enable them to take a quantity equivalent to the weight of dry food which they get in winter. As soon as this quantity is taken they are driven into the stalls, without allowing them to eat more than their real wants demand. If ignorant shepherds allowed them to graze longer, we should be soon punished for it by those diseases of the blood, such as apoplexy, staggers, paralysis, &c. &c. If we graze them in meadows or artificial grasses, it is with still greater precautions against the superabundance of food which they might find there. We should be well satisfied if the grazing season lasted all the year, for this regimen is undoubtedly, when used with precaution, the best. But our winters are long, and we reckon upon a hundred and fifty or a hundred and sixty days of dry stall feeding, during which time hay forms the almost exclusive food of our sheep. They are fed twice a day: their food is regularly weighed out with exactness each time. The wet ewes have, during the six months which follow the birth of their lambs, $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of hay per diem, which includes the food of the lamb. The other grown up sheep, such as dry ewes, wethers, and rams, get from $1\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. to $1\frac{7}{8}$ lbs.; thus the average winter consumption is 1 *k.* per day for each grown sheep. This is the entire quantity of food given to them, and when we give them other food, such as grain, &c. its quantity is deducted from the hay in proportion of two to one in weight. We seldom use roots. Grains are given, but in very small quantities, and in a mixture of barley, oats, and salt. In every season the sheep are taken to a spring of running water twice a day, where they are allowed to drink as much

as they please.* On this regimen our sheep are always in good condition and in good health.

III.—MANNER OF HOUSING.

We are persuaded that the manner in which the flocks are housed in winter and summer, exercises a most marked influence on the fineness and the other qualities of the wool. It appears necessary to the beauty of the fleece, that its wool hairs should be acted upon by the air. Thus litters too seldom renewed, the folding in the open air on sandy or wet grounds, dirty the wool, and form with the sweat a coat of dung, which, uniting at the extremities of the staples, oppose that free circulation of air, and cause a coagulation of the sweat so destructive to the whole fleece. The folding of sheep in the open air has appeared to us detrimental to their health, except in the heat of summer; and even then precautions should be taken to move them on the appearance of rain. Our flocks are never folded out at night; but to prevent them walking twice to the pastures, they are folded at the foot of the mountains (in the intervals of grazing,) during the heat of the day, under the shade of trees, and with the same quantity of litter as they have in the stalls. Our stalls are destined to hold eight hundred sheep, being a hundred and thirty-two feet long by forty deep, and are divided into eight partitions, thus presenting a space of about six feet for each sheep: we do not like to crowd them in so small a space, one about half as large again would be

* This cannot always be done in Australia; in consequence of which the sheep often suffer severely from muddy and unwholesome water. Pumps or wells, however, with drinking troughs, should be substituted when practicable. I found no difficulty in putting this in practice where it was required, and I should have adopted it universally had not opportunities fortunately occurred of selecting stations on the banks of rivers. R. D.

much better. The fronts of our sheep stalls are not walled, but have large frames of wood-work, upon which are fastened eight folding doors. These are left open when required, and the stalls are then closed by hurdles. The wall at the back contains eight large window frames, which in cold weather are closed with wooden shutters.*

Kept in this manner our animals bear fleeces of an ash colour, outside, but never black. We also do not doubt, that the influence of the air, which is thus brought to them, contributes, in a great degree, to the beauty of the fleeces. If the wool-hair is destined to preserve its silkiness and softness, by means of the sweat, it is necessary that this sweat should not be rendered too abundant by adverse causes, such as an accumulation of dirt at the extremity of the fleece, thus preventing it from evaporating after it has performed its functions, or by close and crowded stalls, which cause too great a propensity to perspiration.

* Covering for sheep to lie under may be provided with greater facility in Australia than perhaps in any other quarter of the world. R. D.

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